the weekly
Standard

MAY 23, 2005 $3.95

BUSH, BOLTON, AND THE SENATE
William Kristol • Matthew Continetti

WHAT INSPIRED THIS PAINTING?

(a) Native American lore (b) PETA (c) Isaiah 11:6

The vanishing of Bible literacy in America

by David Gelernter

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MARIJUANA AND YOUR TEEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Office of National Drug Control Policy

Depression. Suicidal Thoughts. Schizophrenia.

If you have outdated perceptions about marijuana, you might be putting your teen at risk. New research is giving us better insight into the serious consequences of teen marijuana use, especially how it impacts mental health.

Did you know that young people who use marijuana weekly have double the risk of depression later in life?[1] And that teens aged 12 to 17 who smoke marijuana weekly are three times more likely than non-users to have suicidal thoughts?[2]

And if that's not bad enough, marijuana use in some teens has been linked to increased risk for schizophrenia in later years.[3]

Today's teens are smoking a more potent drug[4] and starting use at increasingly younger ages during crucial brain development years.[5] Still think marijuana's no big deal?

Remember, you are the most important influence in your teen's life when it comes to drugs,[6] so tell your teen the facts about marijuana. Teens who learn about the risks from their parents are less likely to smoke marijuana or use other drugs than teens who don't.

Let your teens know you don't want them using marijuana. Their mental health may depend on it.

Signed,

- *American Psychiatric Association*
- *American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*
- *American Society of Addiction Medicine*
- *Asian Community Mental Health Services*
- *Association for Medical Education and Research in Substance Abuse*
- *Institute for Behavior and Health, Inc.*
- *National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association*
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[1]Patton, GC et al. Cannabis use and mental health in young people: cohort study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1195–1198, 2002. [2]Greenblatt, J. Adolescent self-reported behaviors and their association with marijuana use, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), 1998. [3]Arseneault, L et al. Cannabis use in adolescence and risk for adult psychosis: longitudinal prospective study. *British Medical Journal*, 325: 1212–1213, 2002; Veen, N et al. Cannabis use and age at onset of schizophrenia. *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161: 501–506, 2004. [4]*Marijuana Potency Monitoring Project. Report No. 83*, University of Mississippi, 2003. [5]SAMHSA. Trends in Initiation of Substance Use, 2003. [6]SAMHSA. Parental Disapproval of Youths' Substance Abuse, 2002.

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Contents

May 23, 2005 • Volume 10, Number 34

2 Scrapbook ..... *Dartmouth, the* NYT, *and more.*

4 Casual ..... *David Skinner, fashion critic.*

6 Correspondence ... *On the filibuster, the estate tax, etc.*

9 Editorial ..... *Bolton to the Rescue*

Articles

10 Trial by Committee *Five interminable hours of advice and consent.* ..... BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

13 Sex and the County *A liberal judge quashes a liberal curriculum.* ..... BY HADLEY ARKES

15 European Disintegration? *The E.U. faces a rare moment of popular judgment.* ..... BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL

17 The Military-Mullah Complex *The militarization of Iranian politics.* ..... BY WILLIAM SAMII

18 Human Rights and U.N. Wrongs *Another item for the reform agenda.* ..... BY ROBERT MCMAHON

20 The Return of HillaryCare *Socialized medicine is still not a good idea.* ..... BY DAVID GRATZER

Cover: Edward Hicks

Features

22 Bible Illiteracy in America

A report just issued by the Bible Literacy Project suggests that young Americans know very little about the Bible. The report is important, but first things first: A fair number of Americans don't see why teenagers should know anything at all about the Bible. ..... BY DAVID GELERNTER

Books & Arts

31 Reagan in Retrospect *How the 40th president looks to history.* ..... BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

34 War of the Words *How the idea of the OED was translated into fact.* ..... BY PAUL DEAN

35 Tales of the Left Coast *When the silver screen was red.* ..... BY RON CAPSHAW

37 Star Wars VI *Naboo, Dooku, and a mission to the Wookiees.* ..... BY JOHN PODHORETZ

39 THE STANDARD READER ..... The New New Journalism; Garlic and Sapphires; Haiku U: From Aristotle to Zola.

40 Parody ..... *I dunk, therefore I am.*

William Kristol, *Editor* **Fred Barnes,** *Executive Editor*
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The Dartmouth Insurgency (cont.)

In a stunning (at least to their critics) upset, Dartmouth alums Peter Robinson and Todd Zywicki have each won a seat on the college's board of trustees. Robinson, a Hoover fellow and former Reagan speechwriter ("Tear down this wall" came from his pen), and Zywicki, who teaches at George Mason University's law school, had run Internet petition drives to get on the ballot, an effort chronicled in these pages by Duncan Currie ("The Dartmouth Insurgency," April 25). The results were made public last week, following nearly two months of electronic and mail-in voting.

Chalk up another victory for the "new media"--namely, for the right-leaning blogosphere. Robinson, a past contributor to this magazine, and Zywicki, who blogs at the Volokh Conspiracy site, relied heavily on online word-of-mouth to publicize their uphill efforts against four candidates hand-picked by the alumni council.

Dartmouth rules bar trustee candidates from electioneering--but only once they've been certified. So as they labored to acquire the requisite 500 petition signatures, Robinson and Zywicki were free to tout their platforms on personal websites and friendly blogs. Though their candidacies were uncoordinated, each championed similar goals: ending Dartmouth's de facto campus speech code and improving the undergraduate experience.

Although both stressed that these issues were nonpartisan, blogs sprang up almost overnight to denounce them as ideological threats. Groups such as "Alumni for a Strong Dartmouth" and "Dartmouth Alumni for Social Change" zinged Robinson and Zywicki for their "reactionary" politics and criticism of Dartmouth president James Wright.

The Dartmouth establishment had a good reason to be startled by the two outsiders. In 2004, another petition candidate, Silicon Valley tycoon T.J. Rodgers, won election to the board of trustees --the first petition candidate to do so since 1980. Rodgers, a self-described libertarian, ran on a similar platform to those of Robinson and Zywicki.

Now three center-right alums in two years have gained positions on the 18-member board by campaigning against the Dartmouth administration and against politically correct speech codes. To say this has raised eyebrows and ruffled feathers in Hanover would be an understatement. Robinson and Zywicki --like Rodgers before them—have gone at the academic establishment head-on and emerged victorious. They join the board officially in June, following Dartmouth's commencement exercises. Their first meeting will probably take place next September.

Trustee-elect Robinson spoke to THE SCRAPBOOK last week, calling the outcome "a victory for alumni participation in the governance of Dartmouth College." He emphasized that blogs "made it possible for me to reach alums" and kept up "interest in the campaign."

More broadly, he said, graduates everywhere can now stay in much better touch with developments at their alma mater. "I learned more in three months of reading these blogs about the actual state of affairs in Hanover, New Hampshire, than [I did] in 25 years of reading the alumni magazine." Blogs thus pose a mortal threat to the "propaganda machines" of major universities. Said Robinson: "That strikes me as a sea change." ♦

Physician, Shrink Thyself

Remember how, back on February 1, 2004, *New York Times* op-ed page editor David Shipley wrote a column describing the high standards he used to select the articles that appeared in his pages? "Our decisions about which essays to publish aren't governed by a need for editorial variety alone," Shipley wrote. "Among other things, we look for timeliness, ingenuity, strength of argument, freshness of opinion, clear writing and newsworthiness."

And remember how, two days later, on February 3, 2004, Shipley published an essay by Erin Sullivan—the author of *Saturn in Transit* and *The Astrology of Midlife and Aging*—which used astrological tables to predict the outcome of the 2004 Democratic primaries? "If seeking the presidency is like reaching for the stars, then why not look to the stars—and the other heavenly bodies—for insights on the candidates," Sullivan wrote. "John Kerry . . . is a Sagittarius with four Gemini planets in the public relationship sector of his birth chart. . . . Born with the rare Mars retrograde, he entered life with a rage—a deep, inner need to overcome (the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. also had the Mars retrograde). . . . The long-term picture depicts him achieving his highest goals." Oops.

When we read Sullivan's essay last year—title: "The Stars Have Voted"—THE SCRAPBOOK chuckled softly to ourselves; how witty and sophisticated, we thought, that Shipley would make fun of his own pretentious "high standards" by publishing a piece of credulous pseudoscience not a week later!

But maybe it wasn't a joke at all. Last Wednesday, May 11, the *Times* printed an op-ed by Belinda Board headlined "The Tipping Point." Board is

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described as a "clinical psychologist based at the University of Surrey" who moonlights as "a consultant on organizational psychology," and her article was just as laughable as Erin Sullivan's—except it wasn't preceded a few days earlier by a haughty note from the *Times*'s op-ed editor. There was nothing remotely ironic about it, in fact.

Board's point, best we can make of it, is that Undersecretary of State John Bolton, the president's distinguished if embattled nominee to be U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is a psychopath . . . not that there's anything wrong with that. Writes Board: The "characteristics of personality disorders can be found throughout society and are not just concentrated in psychiatric or prison hospitals." Case in point: John Bolton, who "has been described as dogmatic, abusive to his subordinates and a bully." Yet the president continues to support him. Why? "Sometimes the characteristics that make someone successful in business or government can render them unpleasant personally. What's more astonishing is that those characteristics when exaggerated are the same ones often found in criminals." Board's conclusion: Successful executives like Bolton "share personality characteristics with psychopaths."

Her advice to Congress: Weigh carefully Bolton's combination of "extreme characteristics," contrasting the "characteristics that have propelled" him "to prominence" against those that "can cause untold human wreckage."

Incidentally, Thomas Lifson subsequently pointed out at *AmericanThinker.com* that Board is identified by the University of Surrey as a Ph.D. candidate. As he points out, "the 'research' on which she based her op-ed was done in 2001, four years ago. We have to wonder what her status was at the time. An undergraduate?"

Our advice to the *New York Times*: Go back to running horoscopes. ♦

As the Crow Hears

We missed this at the time, but there was a classic mistranscription in the *International Herald Tribune*'s coverage of Pope John Paul II's funeral last month: "His folded hands intertwined with a rosary, the body of Pope John Paul II was laid out inside the papal palace on Sunday as the balance of power in the Roman Catholic Church began its shift to the unnamed man who will soon replace him. . . . Tucked under his left arm was the silver staff, called the crow's ear, that he had carried in public." As the correction sheepishly noted: We "used an incorrect term to describe the silver staff of Pope John Paul II. It is a crosier."

The *Guardian* later noted, forgivingly: "This kind of thing often happened, particularly in the *Guardian*, in days when stories had to be phoned through to copytakers, which is how we came to review a work called *Lazy Luminations*, by Britten." ♦

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Casual

Peeping Thong

Since I was going to the hardware store to buy some house paint and brushes, my wife asked me to pick up a bag of manure for our plants. A half hour later, I was standing in line in the gardening department with manure on my hands. Farmers must have this problem all the time, I told myself, working in the fields without a sink nearby.

A few feet to my left, a small fountain was on sale. The water came out of little bamboo tubes before trickling down fake rocks. I considered going over for a quick rinse, but it was Mother's Day and I was pretty sure *Mother wouldn't have* approved. Not that I could put my smelly finger on the reason why. A gentleman, perhaps, isn't supposed to get manure on his hands. But, I would have asked my mother had she been there, what about a gentleman-farmer?

The line I was in didn't move an inch for several minutes because the cashier had left his post. Waiting for him to come back from his price check, cigarette break, or second career as a Fuller Brush salesman, I idly watched the blonde several places in front of me picking up the plants in her cart and inspecting them one by one. Well into her thirties, she wore white capri pants, a sleeveless black top, and platform sandals that made her stand about nine feet tall. With her reddened face and slightly bulging eyes, she looked to be a former fashion model who was still partying like one.

This, anyway, is what I uncharitably thought as I waited to pay for my things. And mine would have remained a passing impression but for what happened next. The blonde giantess bent down to fuss over one of her flowerpots, and by doing so caused the back of her thong to shoot up above the top of her low-slung pants—exposing the triangular interchange where the strings of this undergarment conjoin.

Yawning, I got out of line and headed back into the main part of the store to look for a working cashier and perhaps some water to wash my hands.

The first time one encounters a peeping thong, the effect is, I confess, titillating. The second time surprisingly less so; around the third time, the tawdry display becomes tedious. Also, I am just now realizing that these supposed wardrobe malfunctions aren't malfunctions at all. They are entirely by design, in keeping with the bare-midriff style in which the tops of pants are lowered and the bottoms of shirts are raised.

Thus is the dreary ascendancy of the American bad girl endlessly flaunted. From Monica Lewinsky to Britney Spears to *Sex and the City* to Victoria's Secret commercials, the feminine half of the species has been turned into a writhing temptress of insatiable desire. The girl next door has been replaced. By the slut next door.

A friend told me the following story. He was in a bar when a fellow customer collapsed. People called for an ambulance. Others nudged forward to see what was going on. Luckily, a medical professional was on hand, a young woman who identified herself as an EMT and said she would try to help. A hush fell over the room as she stood over the collapsed patron and then bent down to get a closer look. At which point ("Boing!" my friend says), the Good Samaritan's thong crept into view for the entire bar to see.

A Virginia legislator recently tried to pass a law that would forbid teenaged boys from walking around with the waists of their jeans hanging down to expose their undershorts. This style supposedly originated in the prisons, where convicts are apparently prohibited from having belts. (I understand no better than the next person how it is that what thuggish law-breakers do with their pants influences what suburban teens do with theirs.)

Now the difficulty has spread to the female population. Women, as they've developed a thing for thongs, have not taken measures to spare the rest of us. Here, too, the sartorial inspiration seems to have come from the wrong side of the tracks; I would guess from strippers. For now I've determined to look the other way, but one of these days I'm going to get fed up, and on that day I'll walk over to the offending woman and stick a folded-up dollar bill in her waistband. My guess is, I won't even be slapped.

David Skinner

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Filibuster, Be Gone!

William Kristol ("Break the Filibuster," May 9) and David A. Crockett are spot-on in describing the unconstitutionality of using the filibuster to block presidential appointees.

The relevant portion of Article 2, Section 2—which describes the powers of the presidency—provides that "[the president] shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law . . ."

You will note that in treaty-making, the president is required to have a two-thirds majority (i.e., a supermajority) of the Senate on board. However, his power to appoint ambassadors, judges, ministers, and counsels is clearly *not* limited by the necessity of a supermajority.

Throughout the Constitution, the Framers carefully stipulate when a supermajority is required and by which congressional chamber. Their meaning could not be any clearer: Absent an explicit requirement for a supermajority, only a simple majority is required.

The Democrats are experts at teasing out hidden and novel meanings in the Constitution. Their efforts against the Second Amendment, for example, have been breathtaking. But no matter how they torture the language of the document, Democrats' use of the filibuster to block President Bush's appointment of judges is manifestly unconstitutional.

They have left us with the question famously posed by comedian Richard Pryor: "Who you goin' to believe? Me or your lyin' eyes?"

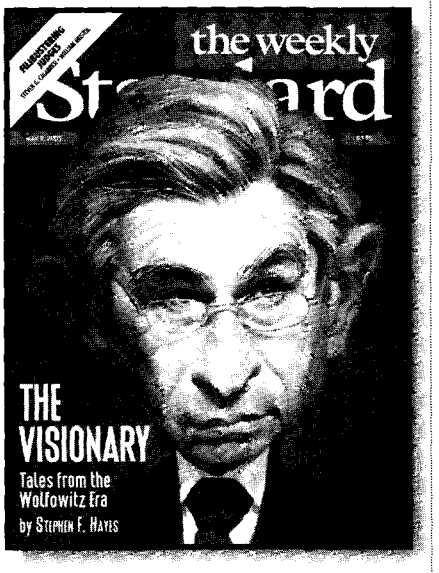
Jim Fink
Lincoln, MA

Out of the Quagmire

Fred Barnes suggests that President Bush's Social Security reform plan is too ambitious ("A Social Security Quagmire?" May 2). To the contrary, the president should be far more aggressive on Social Security, and the system should eventually be given a proper burial.

When FDR hatched Social Security during the Great Depression, the idea was to provide a safety net for older citizens, but not to provide their primary source of retirement income. Since then it has grown into a massive socialist welfare program, which inherently redistributes income without regard to merit. It is also a fraudulent Ponzi scheme, whereby new suckers are required to pay back earlier suckers.

As Bush has pointed out, participants do not have an account balance in their own names, because their money has already been spent. Some of the payroll taxes are not even used to pay retirees, but are applied for the general purposes of the federal government. If a corporate pension plan were administered in this fashion, the company executives would go to jail. Congress would pass new legislation to prevent further abuses, and people would be demanding that the company make retribution to the employees whose contributions were misapplied for fraudulent purposes.



So instead of patching up Social Security, we should be dismantling it. A good beginning would be to allow all participants to bail out on a voluntary basis. The government should offer a lump-sum payment option: to include each participant's aggregate contributions, aggregate employer contributions, plus a nominal rate of interest (maybe 2.5 percent). After making each lump sum payment, the government would have no further liability and the recipient could invest the money however he or she saw fit. This would of course create more government debt, but any realistic solution to the Social Security crisis involves restructuring charges.

Initially, younger Americans (perhaps up to age 45) would bail out, and those already retired or about to retire would opt for remaining in the program to receive their anticipated retirement income. But eventually very few people would want to remain in the socialist program, and it would be mercifully put to sleep.

Jim O'Brien
Maitland, FL

Estate of the Union?

Seldom do I stand in such utter contrast to an opinion appearing in The Weekly Standard. Irwin M. Stelzer's "Death and Taxes" (May 9) argues that estate beneficiaries—if young and/or immature—might squander their inheritance.

A beneficiary's use of inherited wealth is not the government's business. Indeed, Stelzer's reasoning closely tracks that traditionally employed by liberals to justify social engineering policies.

In his final paragraph, Stelzer challenges the "repealers" to choose a tax that must be raised so that the revenue lost from an abolished inheritance tax can be recouped. I do not want to raise *any* taxes. I want to lower federal spending.

For those who might be laughing at the impossibility of a fiscally restrained Congress, I should remind you that less than 1,000 days ago a free Iraq was deemed "impossible." Conservatism has momentum. And raising a tax—any tax—represents a step backward.

Dale Kutsch
Oceanside, CA

Rarely has Irwin M. Stelzer been so wide of the mark as he is in "Death and Taxes." He makes a compelling case that inheritance money often shelters individuals from being forced to learn

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how to be productive. Burkean conservatives can agree. But that is not the same thing as using the confiscatory powers of the state to *compel* such behavior.

One doesn't need to be a libertarian to find Stelzer's argument Krugman-esque at best. If he wants to find ways to expand the government's revenue base, Stelzer need look no further than his own writings in THE WEEKLY STANDARD a few months ago advocating energy taxes.

A $2-per-gallon gasoline tax would offer a superb way to raise revenue, induce productive behavior, protect the environment, and improve our security situation. It might even enable us to further lower marginal income tax rates, reduce or eliminate the even more regressive payroll tax, and liberate ourselves from mindless fuel-economy mandates.

MICHAEL SCHWARTZ
Mill Valley, CA

I SURE HOPE Irwin M. Stelzer was attempting tongue-in-cheek drollery with "Death and Taxes," because the reasoning he used to support the death tax was difficult to follow.

Stelzer offhandedly wonders why conservatives *do* worry that welfare recipients lose the "incentive" to work but *don't* worry that people who inherit wealth often leave the work force. Well, there's a big difference between the two.

A person on welfare is not contributing to society and is, in fact, taxing society's resources, whereas those who are living off an inheritance still contribute to society (by spending their inheritance money and paying income taxes on investments). Moreover, estate beneficiaries have no need of the resources offered by society. The difference could not be clearer.

Amazingly, Stelzer seems to imagine that charitable giving is spurred by the death tax. Yet, even as he seems to believe this position, he presents evidence against it.

Stelzer winds up his piece with an argument by Adam Smith that inherited wealth should be taxed so that every child can discover the gratification of finding his own road in life. I presume Stelzer imagines that everyone would find some kind of moral perfection simply because he started off poor. But I was not aware that the tax code was meant to regulate morality.

Stelzer quotes Bastiat to the effect that men will take pains to be sure their children are provided for, and that inherited wealth is a natural outgrowth of this human propensity. But isn't it just as likely that overburdening death taxes might force fathers to leave their children wanting in the end?

There is a bigger question that Stelzer never seems to address: Why should anyone labor to amass a personal fortune only to have the government swoop in and gobble so much of it up? Let's remember the government does nothing whatsoever to produce wealth, and in fact does a lot to impede its creation.

WARNER TODD HUSTON
Chicago, IL

COMIC BOOKS

AS A FRESHMAN in high school, I was delighted to see Pamela R. Winnick's piece about the poor state of our textbooks ("A Textbook Case of Junk Science," May 9). In our English book, roughly one-fifth of the stories concern the destruction of the earth through nuclear war or environmental ruin. Our science books have the "Big Bang Theory" and "evolution" featured as key vocabulary words without any sort of alternate explanations.

Our social studies books, meanwhile, mention Bill Clinton three times without mentioning Ronald Reagan at all. These books were neither written nor published during Clinton's presidency.

I go to a public high school in Kentucky, but I feel as though I'm attending some sort of snobbish art school. What's worse, our principal seems indifferent on the matter.

CHRIS HENRY
Somerset, KY

DVD NATION

REFLECTING ON "the aesthetic impact of the DVD," Martha Bayles ("Hollywood Means Business," April 25) asks, "Will this help to educate the public about the history of film, thereby developing its taste and improving quality overall? Or will it degrade taste by reducing the experience of watching a movie to something you can do any time, anywhere, on your ever-miniaturizing laptop?"

These alternatives are neither mutually exclusive nor mutually exhaustive. Worse, Bayles provides no reason to think there's an inverse relationship between the availability and accessibility of a movie and the aesthetic value of the experience. If there were, professors of film studies, with easy access and constant exposure to films, would be among those with the most degraded taste.

STEVEN M. SANDERS
Franklin, MA

• • •

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the weekly Standard

Bolton to the Rescue

How did the theme song from the great TV show of my youth go? "There's a hold-up in the Bronx, / Brooklyn's broken out in fights. / There's a traffic jam in Harlem, / That's backed up to Jackson Heights. / There's a scout troop short a child, / Khrushchev's due at Idlewild / . . . Car 54, where are you?"

That's basically the situation of Republicans in Washington. Tom DeLay's under investigation; Bill Frist probably doesn't have the votes to break the judicial filibusters; the Bush administration is going around the country trumpeting its plan to cut Social Security benefits for the middle class; and a hitherto-unproblematic Republican senator from Ohio is denouncing Bush's nominee for U.N. ambassador, and, indeed, Bush's overall foreign policy. Car 54, where are you?

The answer: Right here, with John Bolton in the back seat. The way for the administration and the Republican Congress to deal with the impression—and the reality—of disarray is by winning a quick and decisive victory. Taking the Bolton nomination to the floor, and pushing for his confirmation before Congress's Memorial Day recess, offers the best bet for that right now.

There are two weeks until the recess. As I write (on Friday the 13th!) Senate Majority Leader Frist apparently intends to begin debate on the judicial filibuster, putting off consideration of Bolton for at least a week—but, in all likelihood, until after the recess. Barbara Boxer has put a "hold" on Bolton, and other Democrats such as Chris Dodd have said they would do the same if Boxer releases hers. So if Frist proceeds as planned, Senate Democrats will be seen as having faced down the administration and the GOP majority, while buying time to produce more pseudo-incriminating smears of Bolton and allowing their allies to replay over and over "mainstream" Republican senator George Voinovich's harsh words about the president's nominee.

The Senate leadership correctly understands that judges are the preeminent issue of the session. But that issue can wait for June, when it will set the stage for the forthcoming Supreme Court nomination. The time for the debate over Bolton, and the United Nations, is now. Thursday's Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Bolton suggested why. Chairman Richard Lugar definitively discredited the charges against Bolton's fitness for the job—not that this deterred Voinovich from repeating the bogus charges. But if this debate is repeated on the floor of the Senate, the fact that Lugar had the best of this argument will become abundantly clear. More important, the fact that Republicans have the better of the arguments on U.S. foreign policy, and on the United Nations, will also become clear. The nation will especially enjoy watching Bolton's Democratic critics join with Voinovich in explaining that we do not want a representative with—gasp!—"sharp elbows" at the U.N. and that the U.N.—and its member dictators—needs to be treated with kid gloves.

As we've argued before on this page, Republican senators should challenge their Democratic counterparts to debate John Bolton's record, and the U.N.'s record, every day, for as long as the Democrats want. The Bush administration should put senior spokesmen on TV every night to ask whether the U.N. is just fine as it is, or requires tough-minded reform. After one week of such debate, I suspect Democratic senators with competitive races looming in 2006—especially in states that Bush carried in 2004—might lose their enthusiasm for stalling Bolton. Frist could probably pull off a vote before Memorial Day. Bolton would win. Republicans would be out of the doldrums. And we would have a good U.N. ambassador, an ambassador who knows how that institution works—and doesn't work—and is knowledgeable about the very issues (North Korea's and Iran's nuclear programs) that are likely to dominate its agenda in the coming months.

It is true that moving ahead smartly in this direction would require bold and decisive leadership. But Bill Frist is surely capable of that. It is true that it would put a burden on Republican senators to make the case for Bolton, for Bush's foreign policy, and for aggressive U.N. reform—but senators like Norm Coleman, George Allen, John McCain, and Jon Kyl are more than capable of that. And it is true that it would require the White House to take an occasional break from digging a deeper hole on Social Security in order to make the case for Bolton and Bush's foreign policy. They might even find it an enjoyable and politically profitable enterprise, once they try it.

So let's have two weeks of debate on the floor of the Senate on John Bolton, U.S. foreign policy, and the United Nations. It will prove a valuable tonic for a White House and a Republican Congress that need a pick-me-up—and it will produce a result that will be good for the country.

—*William Kristol*

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Trial by Committee

Five interminable hours of advice and consent.

BY MATTHEW CONTINETTI

THE SENATE Foreign Relations Committee—Richard Lugar, chairman—met in room 419 in the Dirksen Senate Office Building last Thursday, May 12, to decide the fate of John R. Bolton, undersecretary of state for arms control and President Bush's nominee to be the next U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Relaxed after a week-long recess, the senators were getting in a bit of their favorite sort of exercise—the exercise of their right, under the Constitution, to provide "advice" to the president in selecting nominees for high office and "consent" to their appointment. Lugar, under pressure from committee Democrats, had allotted five hours of debate; if everything went according to plan, the committee would vote to send the nomination to the full Senate, which—if everything went according to plan—would then send Bolton on his mustachioed way to New York City. If everything went according to plan.

Previous, well-laid plans had gone awry at the committee's last meeting on April 19, when Ohio Republican George Voinovich, suffering a bout of senatoritis, abruptly told his colleagues he didn't feel "comfortable" voting for Bolton. Ten Republicans and eight Democrats make up the committee, and since the Democrats were uniformly opposed to Bolton, Voinovich's change of heart meant the nomination probably could not be sent to the full Senate. Worse, once Voinovich jumped into the pool and said the water was warm, two other Republicans—Rhode Island's Lincoln Chafee and Nebraska's Chuck Hagel—leapt in and said they weren't ready to vote for Bolton either. Lugar, wresting control of the proceedings, was able to postpone the vote until last week—by which time, he hoped, the committee's Republicans could be herded together. Also Lugar said he'd order the committee staff to continue its investigation into Bolton's background.

The inquiry was exhaustive. Both the State Department and USAID (where Bolton worked as counsel and then as assistant administrator for program and policy coordination during the Reagan presidency) provided 500 pages of documents to the committee. Intelligence officials from various agencies provided another 125 pages. Bolton sat through about 12 hours of committee hearings, met with 23 senators, and walked through a minefield of 157 additional questions submitted by the senators and their staffs. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff conducted 31 interviews with Bolton's associates, and with his accusers. Meanwhile President Bush publicly reiterated his support for Bolton, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice privately spoke to senators on the nominee's behalf.

When Lugar called the May 12 meeting to order, he had with him an eight-page, 40-minute-long statement that refuted, point by point, all of the various accusations against Bolton. Most of the accusations involve bureaucratic infighting at the State Department: Bolton had "pressured" several intelligence analysts; Bolton had refused a promotion to a career civil servant he considered untrustworthy (who got another top post instead); Bolton had delivered a speech in South Korea that the former ambassador there disagreed with. Lugar's conclusion: "There is no evidence that he has broken laws or engaged in serious ethical misconduct."

The other senators read along in silence, their heads lowered, except for Joe Biden, the ranking Democrat, who was staring at the cameras, and Barbara Boxer, who was chewing a piece of gum.

When Lugar mentioned Melody Townsel—the Dallas businesswoman and anti-Bush activist who, in a letter sent to the Democratic blog *Dailykos.com*, alleged that in 1994 Bolton had chased her around a Moscow hotel while "throwing things" at her—the reporters in the audience, and even some senators, laughed. Townsel's unsubstantiated accusations had come to seem preposterous (a confessed plagiarist, she eventually admitted to committee staff that nothing was actually "thrown" at her, and that, according to Lugar, "'chasing' might not be the best word" to describe what happened in Moscow), though it was Biden's reading of those accusations into the record on April 19 that had discomfited Voinovich in the first place.

Lugar finished his presentation with time to spare, and yielded the remainder to Voinovich, who had slipped in a few moments earlier. Voinovich's face was wrinkled and ashen, and he thanked Lugar in grave and somber tones. Unlike Chafee and Hagel, who had told media outlets they were prepared to vote for Bolton, Voinovich had given no indication of how he planned to vote, so when he said he was "confident that I have enough information to cast my vote today," everyone in the room leaned forward in suspense.

"There is a particular concern that I have about this nomination," Voinovich said, "and it involves the big picture of U.S. public diplomacy."

Democratic staff members, sitting against the wall at the front of the room, began to smile.

"Today, the United States is criticized for what the world calls arro-

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Making Diversity a Reality

KURT M. LANDGRAF,
PRESIDENT & CEO, ETS

Like many organizations committed to social justice, ETS faces challenges in creating and sustaining a diverse workforce. In the field of educational measurement, workplace diversity is essential to creating tests that are fair and free of bias.

At the same time, state and federal governments, by adopting higher standards for public schools, are placing greater demands on those who develop, administer and score tests and interpret test results.

For ETS, these are parallel priorities. We insist on a diverse workforce, and we insist on meeting the higher standards that are at the core of education reform.

Yet, in the 2000-2001 academic year, U.S. universities conferred only about 500 doctorates in educational psychology, evaluation and measurement. Of these, only 18 percent came from underrepresented groups, and included many international scholars who later returned home to take up their profession.

This shortfall is further proof that our society is not doing enough to expand educational opportunity across ethnic lines. However, the response that "We want to have a more diverse workforce, but we just can't find enough qualified candidates" doesn't cut it. Worse than an excuse, it's frequently code for something else entirely.

ETS's response has been different. Rather than falling back on excuses, we're recruiting aggressively among ethnically diverse groups, and we're focusing on professional development opportunities to help retain and promote from within.

We are also working to enhance our relationships with institutions that share our values. For example, we're interacting with members of both Historically Black Colleges and Universities and the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities on recruitment.

And each summer, we invite educators and students from underrepresented groups to participate in our Visiting Scholars and Summer Intern programs. These talented individuals enrich our test development process, and help ensure that the concerns of underrepresented groups regarding fairness are represented at ETS.

If American democracy is to thrive, we must achieve equity and excellence in education. ETS's founders believed that access to learning is essential to quality of life and as such should be available to all, and it's what we believe today.

At ETS, we're listening to educators, parents and policymakers. We're learning from sound research. And we're leading the effort to achieve both informed public policy and informed educational practice.

Listening. Learning. Leading.

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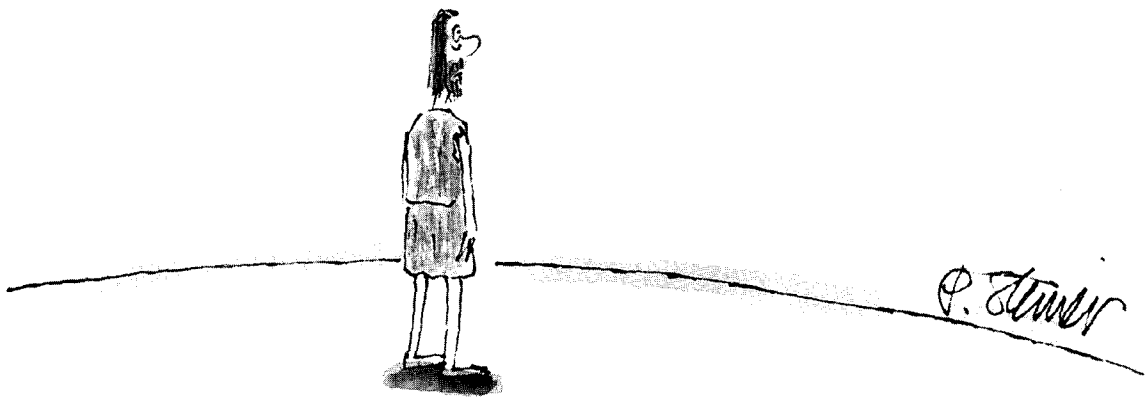

Peter Steiner

gance, unilateralism, and for failing to listen and to seek the support of its friends and allies," Voinovich continued. "We need the help of other countries to share the financial burden that is adding to our national debt, and the human resource burden that our armed forces, national guardsmen, and contractors are bearing so heavily now."

George Allen, the Republican from Virginia, turned red.

"Mr. Chairman," Voinovich said, "it is my opinion that John Bolton is the 'poster child' of what someone in the diplomatic corps should *not* be."

Barack Obama came in and took his seat, but no one noticed.

Voinovich went on, and for a moment it seemed as though Bolton was doomed. But then Voinovich said, "We owe it to the president to give Mr. Bolton an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate," and suddenly the outlines of the deal that Lugar had brokered only hours before became clear: In exchange for sending the Bolton nomination to the floor "without recommendation," Voinovich would have the opportunity—in a clever homage to his Democratic colleague John Kerry's unfortunate votes first for, then against $87 billion in funding for Iraq—to vote for Bolton before voting against him.

So the five hours of debate that Lugar had scheduled turned out to be four hours too many. It took about 50 minutes to ensure Bolton's passage from the committee. What followed was just for fun. There was Joe Biden's impassioned, hour-long, showstopping imitation of . . . er, Joe Biden. ("Come back tomorrow," muttered a reporter from the *Washington Post*. "He'll still be talking.") There was George Allen and Joe Biden's extended football metaphor (ALLEN: "We have moved the ball downfield." BIDEN: "We're looking for an onsides kick." ALLEN: "Say what?" BIDEN: "We're looking for an onsides kick." ALLEN: "We just got a first down. Haven't scored yet").

There was Florida Republican Mel Martinez: "I want to just briefly quote from a soliloquy that took place between Mr. Ford and myself . . ." And there was the senior senator from Florida, Democrat Bill Nelson, a former astronaut who is apparently still lost in space—speaking of which, Nelson must have seen the latest *Star Wars* movie, because he began sounding like

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Yoda, the diminutive green-skinned alien who famously like so his sentences inverts. "We're talking about the U.S. representative to the world body of nations to which we so desperately need at this time," he said.

The clerk called the roll, and the final vote was 10 to 8 in favor. The *New York Times* reported the next day that it "was only the third time in 22 years that the committee has sent a nomination to the Senate without a favorable recommendation." More striking, though, was the lack of enthusiasm with which the committee *Republicans* spoke of Bolton, and the Bush foreign policy more generally. Voinovich's speech easily could have been mistaken for Barbara Boxer's, or Chris Dodd's, or Barack Obama's. But so too could Alaska Republican Lisa Murkowski's ("My concern . . . has more to do with the conduct: how Mr. Bolton conducts himself, how he treats those who disagree with his assessments, how he conducts himself with his superiors, his equals, and those below him on the totem pole"), and Lincoln Chafee's ("I am particularly concerned with the speech that Mr. Bolton gave in Seoul, South Korea, in the midst of those six-nation talks"), and Chuck Hagel's ("The United Nations, like all multilateral institutions that we led on, we framed, we put together after World War II, have been extensions of America's purpose and our power, not limitations").

Although Boxer placed a hold on Bolton's nomination shortly after the committee adjourned, the full Senate likely will vote on the nomination sometime in the next month. Chafee, Murkowski, and Hagel all say they will vote Yes. If they stick to that, Bolton will end up at Turtle Bay (eventually). But if the Bolton hearing is any indication, the Republican senators will cast their Yes votes in simple deference to the president, not in support of the Bush Doctrine, which John Bolton so perfectly embodies.

As I left the hearing room I couldn't help but think that the Foreign Relations Committee was more John Kerry's than George Bush's. ♦

Sex and the County

A liberal judge quashes a liberal curriculum.

BY HADLEY ARKES

A FEDERAL DISTRICT JUDGE in Maryland has jolted the local liberal establishment in Montgomery County by blocking a pilot program in sex education. The program was designed to sweep away the "myths"—the lingering moral inhibitions and retrograde theological teachings—that apparently feed reservations, still widely held, about homosexuality and same-sex marriage. Judge Alexander Williams Jr. put the kibosh on this plan, and the jolt has had a deeper resonance, not least because Williams happens to be a Clinton appointee. But the lasting tremors come from the fact that the decisive strands in his May 5 judgment are lines of argument that have been used most often by the left: The judge invoked the concern for an establishment of religion, and beyond that, he raised the charge, under the First Amendment, that people with discordant views were being blocked from the public square.

The action in this case came in one of the most liberal counties in Maryland, encompassing the suburbs of Washington, D.C. An advisory committee was put together in November 2002 to recommend a new program of "health education" dealing with "sexual variation." The program, when it was finally written, reflected the liberal orthodoxy of the education establishment. With the claim to teach in an authoritative way about health and sex, the program put forth a series of "myths" to be corrected with "facts." But the myths were not all mythical, nor the facts all factual. And the authors could not restrain themselves from pronouncing on the moral dimness of people holding opposing views, including the theological backwardness of those religions that continue to honor the tradition of Jewish and Christian teaching on these matters.

The committee "informed" students, then, that "approximately 1 in 10" people are gay, lesbian, or bisexual. (That figure has long been discredited; more sober estimates put the figure closer to 2 percent). By any realistic measure, the epidemic of HIV infection is attributable overwhelmingly to the sexual practices of gay men. But the report, offering instruction in health, glides past the issue of fatal diseases by noting merely that "other groups are catching up"—e.g., intravenous drug users and "heterosexual women (17-30 years old)."

The committee assured students that homosexuality is no more abnormal than left-handedness. In contrast, "homophobia rather than homosexuality should be cured." What critics offer as moral reservations are reduced then to a psychological disorder; they do not elicit reasons to deal with their arguments, but therapy. Morality itself, the committee told students, is a "subjective issue . . . based on beliefs and values," which differ among communities according to their histories and conventions.

As for biblical teaching, the committee noted that the Bible contains numerous passages condemning the practices of heterosexuals. Among

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the things condemned have been "adultery, incest, wearing clothing made from more than one kind of fiber, and eating shellfish, like shrimp and lobster." The implication, of course, is that the Jewish rules on kashrut in eating and clothing are just so many conventions that most thoughtful people would regard as quaint, without moral force. "Fortunately," said the committee, "many within organized religions are beginning to address the homophobia of the church," by which they mean, of course, the Catholic church. By way of contrast they laud, among others, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the Society of Friends (Quakers), for supporting "full civil rights for gay men and lesbians." Catholics, Evangelicals, Mormons, Orthodox Jews—these are apparently the retrograde religions, for in holding to their traditional teaching, even as they minister to gays and lesbians, they deny the civil rights of these Americans.

With no sense that there was anything the least problematic in this approach, the Montgomery County Board of Education voted to install this new regimen for eighth and tenth-graders in six schools, beginning in May 2005. But the move drew a lawsuit by parents and citizens, organized into the Citizens for a Responsible Curriculum, along with Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays (PFOX).

Even a judge well seasoned in Democratic politics in Maryland could find something unsettling in this new curriculum; and indeed, it might have been his own liberal sensitivities that set off the alarms for Judge Williams. He professed himself to be "extremely troubled" by the willingness of the board "to venture—or perhaps more correctly bound—into the crossroads of controversy where religion, morality, and homosexuality converge." Williams himself had taken a master's degree in divinity and, without revealing anything of his own theological leanings, he remarked on the willingness of the curriculum to suggest that "the Baptist Church's position on homosexuality is theologically flawed."

As Williams noted, the curriculum "juxtaposes this portrait of an intolerant and Biblically misguided Baptist Church against other, preferred Churches, which are more friendly towards the homosexual lifestyle." In particular, the curriculum "plainly portrays Baptist churches as wrongly expressing the same intolerant attitude towards homosexuals today as they did towards African Americans during segregation." Williams observed that Baptists were presented here as "unenlightened" and "misguided" and wanting in the "tolerance" that marked the enlightened religions. In the name of secularism, or detachment from religion, the board was doing nothing less than establishing one segment of the religious in the country as less legitimate, less in accord with the liberality of the laws, and yes, less to be tolerated. So much for the Establishment Clause.

But then there was the other part of the First Amendment, dealing with speech and expression. Here the judge complained that the new curriculum "open[ed] up the classroom to the subject of . . . the moral rightness of the homosexual lifestyle"—and then presented "only one view on the subject—that homosexuality is a natural and morally correct lifestyle—to the exclusion of other perspectives." With these objections, Williams issued a temporary restraining order. No lasting harm, he thought, would be inflicted by withholding this pilot program until it could be more fully considered. But the faults in the program threatened an immediate violation of the Constitution and a lasting wrong.

Judge Williams professed finally that he did not understand why the provision of "health-related information" required the defendants to "offer up their opinion on such controversial topics as whether homosexuality is a sin, . . . and whether churches that condemn homosexuality are on theologically solid ground." In that way, he dropped some hints to the members of the

From Montgomery County's "Myths and Facts" handout

MYTH: Homosexuality is a sin.

FACTS: The Bible contains six passages which condemn homosexual behavior. The Bible also contains numerous passages condemning heterosexual behavior. Theologians and Biblical scholars continue to differ on many Biblical interpretations. They agree on one thing, however. Jesus said absolutely nothing at all about homosexuality. Among the many things deemed an abomination are adultery, incest, wearing clothing made from more than one kind of fiber, and eating shellfish, like shrimp and lobster.

Religion has often been misused to justify hatred and oppression. Less than a half a century ago, Baptist churches (among others) in this country defended racial segregation on the basis that it was condoned by the Bible. Early Christians were not hostile to homosexuals. Intolerance became the dominant attitude only after the Twelfth Century. Today, many people no longer tolerate generalizations about homosexuality as pathology or sin. Few would condemn heterosexuality as immoral—despite the high incidence of rape, incest, child abuse, adultery, family violence, promiscuity, and venereal disease among heterosexuals.

Fortunately, many within organized religions are beginning to address the homophobia of the church. The National Council of Churches of Christ, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Society of Friends (Quakers), and the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches support full civil rights for gay men and lesbians, as they do for everyone else.

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school board as to how they might get themselves out of this fix. They might purge from the curriculum any attempts to pronounce on the legitimacy of the homosexual life or to render judgment on which religions are progressive or retrograde.

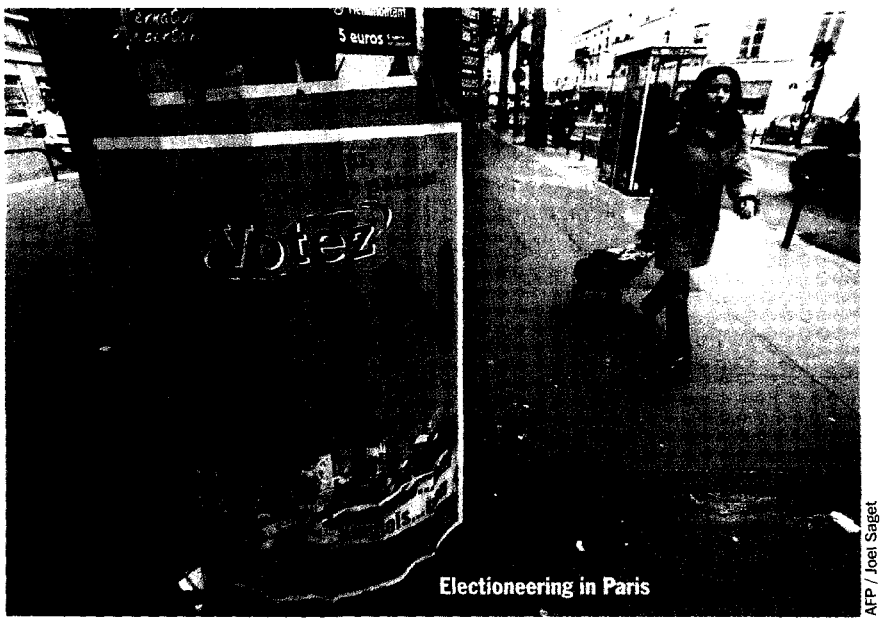
Judge Williams also gave some fine hints to Republicans in Congress if they would only be alert to them--and to their own legislative powers. After all, if the courts can articulate new rights under the Constitution, the legislative branch must be able to vindicate those same rights. And in vindicating them, the legislators may give them more proportion, more precision—and more bite. Do liberals want public schools purged entirely of religion? Then there should be no move by school boards, principals, or teachers to stamp some religions as favored and others as backward. No underhanded attempts to "establish" the religion of secularism. Do liberals want to break through conventions with "sex education"? Then education it should be: The life-shortening hazards of homosexual behavior should be conveyed, along with information about the other hazards of incautious sex; the record of conversions from the homosexual life should be put in texts along with the inconclusive arguments over the "gay gene."

If education is to be supported through federal aid, then the terms should be stringently set forth and instruction provided in an exacting, even-handed way. Faced with these requirements, the board in Montgomery County might prefer to revert to the curriculum as it used to be, and preserve a decorous silence: No endorsement of homosexual life, and, of course, no wounding words about gays and lesbians.

All of this could be done readily by a Republican Congress, taking up the liberal themes that Judge Williams brought down on the head of a liberal school board. Once again, conservatives may do their most telling work simply by asking liberals to live by their own slogans, and by the laws they hand down for others. ♦

European Disintegration?

The E.U. faces a rare moment of popular judgment. BY CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL



Electioneering in Paris

AFP / Joel Saget

London

IT HAS BEEN SAID in many an Old World barroom that the European Union has a regulation for everything. Not true. Last week it became clear that the E.U. has no equivalent of the Hatch Act, the U.S. law that forbids government employees from engaging in partisan political campaigns.

The E.U. hopes that its draft "constitutional treaty"– a four-inch-thick document that codifies existing laws, enumerates the E.U.'s "competences," and makes elaborate lists of human rights—will have been ratified by all 25 E.U. member states sometime next year. Last month, it was approved by the parliaments of Greece, Belgium, and (after a flurry of government-funded publicity) Spain. It breezed through the German Bundestag last week.

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But a dozen European countries have promised to submit the document to their voters in a referendum. In the first two big tests, among two of the least Euroskeptic populations on the continent, the document stands a good chance of going down. A poll in *Le Monde* shows the French, who will vote on May 29, narrowly supporting the treaty, although the "No" position has been winning all spring. In Holland, which will vote three days later, sentiment is running 53-47 against, and hardening, according to pollster Maurice de Hond. This bodes ill for the referenda in those countries—such as Denmark and the Czech Republic—that have always been lukewarm about the idea of Europe-wide government in the first place.

Faced with this threat, advocates of European integration have made common cause to scare their publics to death. In France, president Jacques Chirac threatened his constituents

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with excommunication on national television. "You can't say, 'I'm a European and I'm voting No,'" he warned. It has become commonplace among the E.U.'s advocates to assign it credit for everything from feminism to victory in the Cold War, but in Holland, things went even further than that. Justice minister Piet-Hein Donner invoked the specter of Yugoslavia to describe what would happen if Europe flagged in the task of dissolving its nation states. And prime minister Jan-Peter Balkenende dropped a very broad hint at the close of an interview with the *NRC Handelsblad* newspaper: "I've been in Auschwitz and Yad Vashem," he said. "The images haunt me every day. It is supremely important for us to avoid such things in Europe. We really ought to think about that more."

Sweden's European commissioner, Margot Wallstrom, gave a speech against nationalism on V-E Day weekend at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Prague. London's *Daily Telegraph* described the speech under the headline: "Vote for E.U. constitution or risk new Holocaust, says Brussels." Wallstrom claims she was misquoted, but the printed text her staff handed out to reporters read: "There are those today who want to scrap the supranational idea. They want the European Union to go back to the old purely inter-governmental way of doing things. I say those people should come to Terezin [Theresienstadt] and see where that old road leads." Her country does not plan a referendum.

The effect of this publicity blitz, though, has been marginal. After Balkenende and his cabinet had spent a solid week of all-out campaigning for the constitution, Dutch pollster de Hond found that 70 percent of Netherlands respondents thought the prime minister "unconvincing," while 18 percent were swayed; 38 percent said they were more anti-Europe than before Balkenende started talking, while 17 percent said they were more pro.

Part of the problem is the document itself. What is described as a "constitution" actually bundles together much of the regulation the E.U. has passed at various summits over the decades. It gets the worst of both worlds: It's authoritative and uninspiring. But it does a good deal to move the E.U. towards being a superstate. It proclaims the superiority of the E.U.'s laws to those of its constituent nation states, and strips the power to make European laws from the European Council (made up of national ministers). It makes adjustments so that the 10 new members who joined in 2004 do not render the whole mechanism unworkable. Under the system in place since 2000, E.U. member states must come to unanimous agreement on major policy changes. Under the draft constitution, decisions taken in the European Council could pass by a "qualified majority" of 55 percent of council members, provided the states they represent compose 65 percent of the total E.U. population.

Who could have known, when work began on the constitution back in the 1990s, that it would touch on what are the two sore spots for the European-on-the-street in the spring of 2005? The first is that last year's accession of the old East Bloc countries has brought an unexpected cataclysm. According to economist Hans-Werner Sinn of the Munich-based Institute for Economic Research (IFO), when Spain and Portugal joined the E.U. two decades ago, their average hourly labor costs were about half of West Germany's. But today's Eastern Europeans—in such skills-rich places as Slovakia and Hungary —will work at one-seventh the cost of the aging, gripe-prone German work force. The result is that France and Germany's already troubled industrial sectors are disappearing to the east at lightning speed. Asking Western Europeans to vote "Yes" on a constitution meant to accommodate the newly arrived Slovaks and Magyars is a tough sell.

The other problem is Turkey, which has sought accession to the E.U. since the early 1960s. E.U. leaders agreed to open negotiations for accession last fall. Turkey has the same low-wage/reasonable-productivity problem in spades. And it is Muslim. On top of that, its population is growing at developing-world rates, so that it will be tens of millions of people larger than any other European country when it joins. France's National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (whose absence from the "No" campaign had up till now greatly broadened its appeal) weighed in last Wednesday with a thundering op-ed in *Le Figaro* in which he warned that a growing Turkey would be "the centerpiece of any blocking majority" against France. This is alarmist, but not wrong.

The collision of Turkey and the constitution has sent more moderate French policy-makers into a panic. Jacques Chirac has solemnly promised that French voters will get a final referendum on Turkish membership. Since there is not a single national public in Europe that favors Turkey, such a vote would doom its candidacy. Nicolas Sarkozy, Chirac's rival and heir-apparent, has been giving speeches for the last several weeks in favor of the constitution and against Turkey. A loosely organized Europe will have room for Turkey, he reasons. But the more closely Europe is integrated, the harder Turkey will find it to live up to its picayune rules. In short: The only way to keep Turkey out is to empower the people who invited it in. An entire group of mostly conservative legislators has rallied around this argument. Frenchly, they call themselves "Yes for No."

Never has Europe been closer to getting shown up as yesterday's wave of the future. The Dutch philosopher Ad Verbrugge recently gave a fascinating interview about discontent with Europe to the *NRC Handelsblad*. Europe is a system that presents itself as the only logical response to modern conditions, but it is actually being propped up by taboos, said Verbrugge. He likened it to Dutch multiculturalism before the emergence of anti-immigrant populist Pim Fortuyn, who became the most beloved politician in the country in a few short weeks, before his assassination on the eve of elections in May 2002. "Europe," Verbrugge warned, "is at a pre-Fortuyn stage." ♦

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The Military-Mullah Complex

The militarization of Iranian politics.

BY WILLIAM SAMII

CANDIDATES for Iran's June 17 presidential election recently began registering to run. The entry into the race of three candidates linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, the praetorian force created after the 1979 revolution, exemplifies the distinctly military tone the country's politics has taken on recently. This process has important implications for politics inside Iran and for Iran's relations with the international community.

The most recent person to announce his candidacy is Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, who resigned as chief of Iran's national police in the first week of April. Before his appointment as police chief in June 2000, Qalibaf commanded the Revolutionary Guards Air Force. Notably, he was one of the 24 Guards Corps commanders who signed a July 1999 letter to President Mohammad Khatami urging him to act against student demonstrators before the military took matters into its own hands. "Our patience has run out," the letter said. "We cannot tolerate this situation any longer if it is not dealt with."

Qalibaf is popular with younger so-called conservatives associated with the Islamic Iran Developers Council (known by the Persian name *Abadgaran*), the same group that dominated the February 2004 parliamentary and municipal-council elections in 2003.

Other conservative candidates with a background in the Revolutionary Guards are Mohsen Rezai, who commanded the corps from 1981 to 1997, and Ali Larijani, who served as a political functionary in the corps. Larijani is the favorite of the older mainstream conservative groups, and Rezai has vowed to run as an independent candidate regardless of the support he gets from mainstream figures.

Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf

AFP / Getty Images / Behrouz Mehri

The wild card in the election is Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, who served as president from 1989 to 1997. He has consistently said he would prefer to see new faces leading the country, but on May 10 he announced he would become a candidate. He is seen as pragmatic and relatively centrist, and his entry into the race will reduce support for both the conservative and the pro-reform candidates.

The victory of a candidate with a background in the Revolutionary Guards would build on what some observers view as the "conservative coup" in the parliamentary elections of 2004. This could lead to the emergence of a militarized administration that would try to restore the revolutionary and religious values ascendant immediately after the 1979 revolution, and also would try to restore the national unity that existed during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-88. Under those circumstances, dissidents, the weak, and the disenfranchised would have nobody to defend them. For example, reformist legislators exposed the circumstances surrounding the summer 2003 demise of Canadian photojournalist Zahra Kazemi, who was beaten to death while in custody. More recently, it was a former vice president who detailed the torture of imprisoned Internet activists.

The election of a president linked with the Revolutionary Guards would also affect Iran's relationships with other countries, where the nuclear issue is the predominant concern. Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapons capability and is working on the means to deliver such weapons. Yet Tehran claims that it wants nuclear energy only for peaceful purposes, and Iranian officials claim that the country's supreme leader has issued a religious decree banning the use of weapons of mass destruction.

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In Iran the nuclear issue is being portrayed in nationalistic terms, and the candidates have played on this. Larijani famously compared the Iran-E.U. agreement suspending uranium enrichment in exchange for economic concessions to a deal trading a pearl for a piece of candy. Rezai warned last year that Europe might misinterpret Iran's cooperation as weakness, and he advocates the resumption of uranium enrichment.

There is the distinct possibility that a militarized Iran, with a new president backed by a conservative legislature, would renounce its international nuclear obligations. While there is little doubt that Iran is already in violation of its commitments, the need to operate clandestinely has slowed the process somewhat. If Iran withdraws from the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors no longer have access to Iranian nuclear sites, then the weaponization program can resume, and at an even faster pace than before.

At first glance it would appear that there is little the international community can do in the short term to affect the Iranian presidential election or to stave off the militarization of the country's politics. But the regime apparently thinks otherwise. In particular, it seems to fear the impact of unfiltered information and democracy. It has already started to seize satellite dishes, which are illegal, and fine their owners in an attempt to control news from the outside about the upcoming election. Furthermore, Tehran has denounced recent U.S. efforts to support democracy and human rights activists in Iran.

Support for Iranians' democratic aspirations and the defeat of the Revolutionary Guards in the country's politics could delay Iran's nuclear breakout. There is no guarantee that Iranians will forsake what they interpret as their right to nuclear technology, but a democratic government in Tehran is unlikely to want nuclear weapons or pose a threat to its neighbors or to the United States. ♦

Human Rights and U.N. Wrongs

Another item for the reform agenda.

BY ROBERT MCMAHON

FEW ARE HAPPY with a U.N. Human Rights Commission that has routinely welcomed into its ranks some of the world's most monstrous regimes. But Secretary General Kofi Annan's plan to overhaul the dysfunctional commission is no solution. It hinges on a crucial, flawed premise—that member states are capable of choosing peers who can properly police rights abuses. Annan's proposal, initially embraced by many in the West, would replace the 53-country commission with a smaller, permanent Human Rights Council. The U.N. General Assembly would elect members to this council by a two-thirds majority. These members, the proposal says, "should undertake to abide by the highest human rights standards."

The goal is to end the practice whereby serial rights-abusers regularly lobby for election to the human rights commission and then band together to block any meaningful scrutiny of their records.

But Annan's proposal amounts to reshuffling the same tainted cards. The General Assembly, after all, is already responsible for appointing states to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), which chooses the members of the human rights commission. There is no reason to expect that the ingrained deal-making involved in picking commission members would change if the General Assembly were made directly responsible.

Votes in the assembly to fill the U.N.'s councils, commissions, or committees are usually foregone conclusions after the five U.N. regional groups promote candidates. Within each region, the choices are sometimes the result of intense politicking, sometimes merely amount to a country's taking its turn in the rotation. Adhering to *any* human rights standard, much less "the highest" such standards, is rarely a consideration. The human rights watchdog Freedom House notes in its latest survey that nearly one-third of the commission's members are "not free" and another quarter are only "partly free."

The most recent selection of members to the commission, in late April, is illustrative. The Latin America group chose Venezuela, the Africa group's choice was Zimbabwe, and the Asia group renewed China for another three-year term. The Eastern Europe group, with a growing number of transitional democracies, produced an actual competition between authoritarian Azerbaijan and new E.U. member Latvia. ECOSOC chose Azerbaijan.

Annan's proposal seeks to get around this regional maneuvering by giving the General Assembly a direct vote. But the assembly, which holds its own debate on human rights each autumn, goes through the same annual charade as the Geneva-based commission. Last November, coalitions banded together in the assembly to defeat, through procedural moves, a resolution denouncing human rights violations in Sudan's Darfur region as well as measures critical of Zimbabwe and Belarus.

A frustrated U.S. ambassador John Danforth said after the Sudan vote:

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"One wonders about the utility of the General Assembly on days like this." In both Geneva and New York, members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Non-Aligned Movement are especially outspoken. They typically denounce single-country resolutions and, to the extent they acknowledge human rights problems, prefer "technical assistance" to any criticism of particular governments (though these same states vote overwhelmingly to censure Israel for actions against Palestinians).

After witnessing her first commission session last month as U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, Louise Arbour, a Canadian supreme court justice, told reporters the agency "carries so much baggage that it is now in my view an impediment to its capacity to do the most difficult part of its work, which is the monitoring of the effective implementation of human rights."

The Bush administration has begun to look for a solution in a democracy caucus at the U.N., drawn from the nascent Community of Democracies. At the community's latest ministerial meeting in Chile on April 28, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice urged members to work together at the U.N. to create a legitimate human rights body. The community wrapped up its meeting with a statement pledging to do just that.

But the democracy caucus is off to a sluggish start. It has been a mostly mute presence at the past two human rights commission sessions. Worse, two founding members of the Community of Democracies—India and South Africa—regularly align themselves with rights abusers on the commission to block so-called "naming and shaming" resolutions. Another key democracy, Brazil, usually abstains or votes against such resolutions because it doesn't believe in their effectiveness.

Caucus members acknowledge a fault line on human rights issues that runs roughly between democracies from the developing and the developed world. It reflects, in part, the continued influence of the Non-Aligned Movement, which emphasizes social and economic rights over civil and political rights. But the effort to make the democracy caucus a force for human rights advocacy at the U.N. is still a promising one. Eastern Europe and Latin American states such as Chile and Mexico are lending the most energy to the initiative. Eastern European leaders often refer to their own recent history under communism as proof of the value of shining an international spotlight on human rights issues. Mexico, under Vicente Fox, has won applause from rights experts for its efforts on the commission. It has consistently supported resolutions censuring Cuba, a sharp rebuke to the Castro regime.

But it will take years before a critical mass of states at the U.N. regularly

Michael Ramirez

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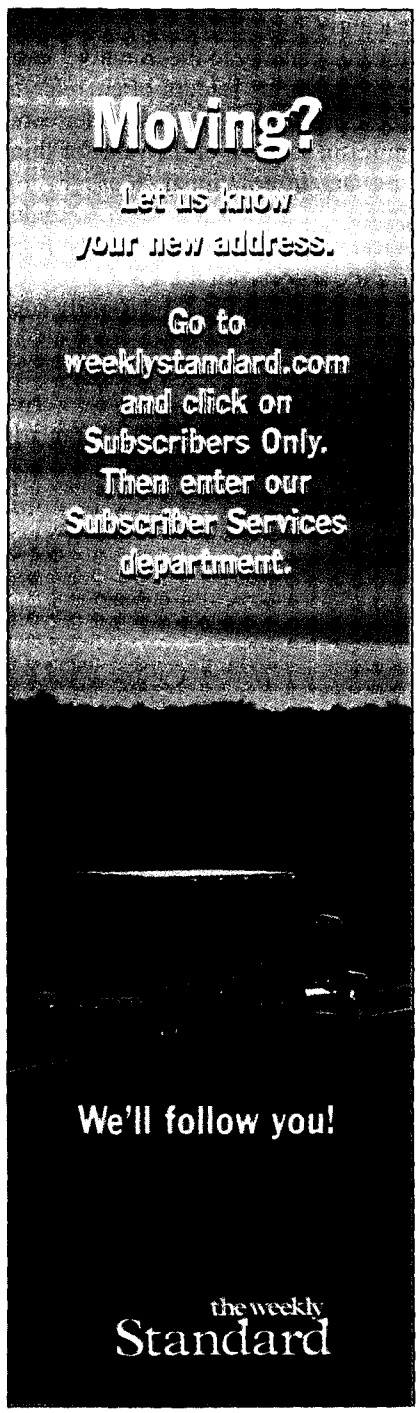
vote to uphold the organization's founding principles on human rights. Perhaps the disbandment of the Human Rights Commission should take place, as Kofi Annan intends, just for the symbolic value of burying a discredited institution. But we should not expect any replacement selected by the General Assembly, whatever it's called, to make much of an improvement in the short term. ♦



The Return of HillaryCare

Socialized medicine is still not a good idea.

BY DAVID GRATZER

PAUL KRUGMAN has been using his space on the *New York Times* op-ed page for weeks now to discuss America's "real crisis"—not Social Security but health care. Krugman deplores the horrid state of American medicine, the large number of uninsured, and the high cost of it all. He claims that "the private sector is often bloated and bureaucratic" and finds solace in the supposed outperformance of other countries' "universal" systems. Sound familiar? If the Princeton economist turned pundit is any indicator, HillaryCare is back on the radar.

Krugman is not alone in his nostalgia. The *Los Angeles Times* muses wistfully that HillaryCare may not have been such a bad idea. Arnold Relman, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, describes the problems of American medicine in a 7,500-word essay for the *New Republic*, concluding that markets don't work. Matt Miller, a centrist in the Clinton administration's OMB, argues in *Fortune* that government-financed health care is a winning political idea—for Republicans.

But government-run health care didn't make sense for America in 1994, and it still doesn't. Krugman's arguments are enticing. But they gloss over basic facts. Consider:

> Americans tend to believe that we have the best health care system in the world. . . . But it isn't true. We spend far more per person on health care . . . yet rank near the bottom among industrial countries in indicators from life expectancy to infant mortality.

Krugman's error here is a common one: assuming that universal health insurance and good health go hand-in-hand. But life is not so simple. Take infant mortality. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, Mexican-American and white babies in the United States have a lower infant mortality rate (about 6 in a thousand live births) than Native Americans (9) or blacks (14). Yet Mexican Americans also have the least access to health insurance of any of these groups. In fact, it's even more complicated: A study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests that Mexican-American babies are twice as likely to be born outside a hospital as babies of all other groups.

Infant mortality statistics—like life expectancy—reflect a mosaic of factors, such as diet, marital status, drug use, and cultural values. Dismissing American health care on the basis of such statistics is like declaring Cuban democracy stronger than America's based on voter turnout.

Krugman again:

> Amazing, isn't it? U.S. health care is so expensive that our government spends more on health care than the governments of other advanced countries, even though the private sector pays a far higher share of the bills. . . . What do we get for all that money? Not much.

Actually, if we measure a health care system by how well it serves its sick citizens, American medicine excels. Comparing breast cancer statistics in Germany, Britain, France,

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Spain, Italy, and the United States, market analyst Datamonitor finds that 95 percent of American women are diagnosed in early stages (I or II). In contrast, a full 20 percent of European women are diagnosed in late stages. WHO data on five-year survival rates for various types of cancers bear this out. For leukemia the American survival rate is almost 50 percent; the European rate, just 35 percent. Esophageal carcinoma: 12 percent in the United States, 6 percent in Europe. Say what you want about the problems of American health care, but for those stricken with disease, there's no better place to be than the United States.

Like many critics of American health care, Krugman argues that the costs are just too high: "In 2002 . . . the United States spent $5,267 on health care for each man, woman, and child." Health care spending in Canada and Britain, he observes, is a fraction of that. He also zeroes in on the troubles of General Motors, which spends $1,500 on health care for every car produced. Even more problematic: "Medical costs are once again rising rapidly."

No one would dispute that American health care is expensive. But a bargain isn't always a good deal. Britons spend a fraction of what Americans do—and wait for practically every test, surgery, or specialist consultation. This spring, the story of Margaret Dixon, an English pensioner awaiting a risky surgery, caused a political storm. She was prepped for the procedure and, expecting the worst, said goodbye to her family—only to be bumped by a more urgent case. Again she waited, again she was prepped, and again she said goodbye to her family—and she was bumped again. In all, she says, her surgery has been canceled seven times. (National Health Service officials dispute her account, arguing it's "only" been four times.)

Such stories are all too common under public systems. Data from the Commonwealth Fund show just 5 percent of American patients wait longer than four months for an elective procedure, as do 23 percent of Australians, 27 percent of Canadians, and 36 percent of Britons.

And GM? The automaker's problems aren't necessarily representative of corporate America. GM offers workers a gold-plated health plan that features no deductibles and minimal co-pays even for prescription drugs—George Will aptly dubbed GM "a welfare state." Were GM to offer a more typical plan, the Center for Automotive Research estimates that the company could save a billion dollars next year.

For Krugman and like-minded pundits, the solution is simple: junk "ideology" and the "obsession" with the private sector in favor of the Utopian ideal of socialized medicine—which, incidentally, can't be made to work in any country that has subscribed to it. But a better and less radical approach would start by asking: Why are health costs rising so dramatically in the first place?

No one would dispute that American health care is expensive. But a bargain isn't always a good deal.

The central problem is the *way* Americans pay for their care. Rather than paying directly, most people get their health insurance from their employers. Someone else foots the bill. This odd financing arrangement developed because of World War II wage controls. Employers began to provide health benefits as a disguised form of income, and their incentive to do so only increased when the IRS ruled that, unlike income, these employer-provided benefits would not be taxed.

The resulting accidental system is wasteful and bureaucratic. With Americans paying directly just 14 cents for every health dollar they spend, there is much incentive to spend first, and ask questions later. Health managers, meanwhile, create bureaucratic hurdles in an attempt to constrain patient choice (and thus costs). During the 1990s-heyday of managed care, for instance, HMOs attempted to dictate whether and when their patients were tested.

An answer to the predicament? American health care needs to evolve along a third way—not the rationing of public systems, or the bureaucracy of HMOs. Instead, Americans should be more involved in their health care decisions. Consumer-driven health care attempts to do exactly this. In 2003, Congress created health savings accounts (HSAs) in the Medicare Modernization Act, a major breakthrough. HSAs marry high-deductible insurance (that is, real insurance, for unusual, out-of-the-ordinary expenses) with a tax-free savings account for smaller health expenses. HSAs thereby encourage consumers to shop around and ask providers tough questions. The *Miami Herald* recently ran a story on a Fort Lauderdale woman who shopped around for physiotherapy—and saved herself a thousand dollars a session.

Krugman likes to cite General Motors as an example of the hopelessness of American health care. But there are countervailing examples of consumer-driven plans that work quite well. Whole Foods, the world's fastest growing grocery chain, has a health plan based on health savings accounts and spends about half of the national average for employee health care.

There is still much work for Congress to do. Health care is badly overregulated. Some on the Hill have sought to address this; Rep. John Shadegg of Arizona, for example, has proposed legislation allowing people to buy health insurance from out-of-state providers, thereby fostering national competition in what is currently a badly Balkanized industry regulated state by state. President Bush and the Republican leadership have invested little political capital in such initiatives. The return of HillaryCare to the national debate should give them incentive to act. ♦

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Edward Hicks's 'Peaceable Kingdom'

Bible Illiteracy in America

By David Gelernter

A report just issued by the Bible Literacy Project (more on this later) suggests that young Americans know very little about the Bible. The report is important, but first things first: A fair number of Americans don't see why teenagers should know anything at all about the Bible.

Scripture begins with God creating the world, but there is something these verses don't tell you: The Bible has itself created worlds. Wherever you stand on the spectrum from devout to atheist, you must acknowledge that the Bible has been a creative force without parallel in history.

Go to the center of Paris and drop in on the apotheosis of the French Middle Ages—Sainte Chapelle, whose walls are made almost entirely of stained glass. It "has rightly been called," writes the scholar Shalom Spiegel, "the most wonderful of pictured Bibles." The King James Bible, says Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "has influenced our literature more deeply than any other book—more deeply even than all the writings of Shakespeare—far more deeply." The poet and painter William Blake calls the Old and New Testaments "the Great Codes of Art." America's foremost prophet offers his culminating vision in the second inaugural address—"With malice toward none; with charity

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for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right . . ." Lincoln's speech "reads like a supplement to the Bible," writes the historian William Wolf, with its "fourteen references to God, four direct quotations from Genesis, Psalms, and Matthew, and other allusions to scriptural teaching." "The best gift God has given to man," Lincoln called the Bible. "But for it we could not know right from wrong."

Ronald Reagan called America "a great shining city on a hill," three-and-a-half centuries after John Winthrop (sailing for Boston in 1630) anticipated a new community that would be "as a Citty upon a Hill"—invoking the famous verse in Matthew, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (5:14). Which harks back in turn to the prophets (Isaiah 2:2-3, Micah 4:2) and the book of Proverbs (4:18). John Livingstone Lowe called the King James Bible "the noblest monument of English prose" (1936); George Saintsbury called it "probably the greatest prose work in any language" (1887). Nearly two millennia earlier, the great Pharisee rabbi Hillel described the ideal life: "loving peace and pursuing peace; loving humanity and bringing it close to the Torah."

Here is a basic question about America that ought to be on page 1 of every history book: What made the nation's Founders so sure they were onto something big? America today is the most powerful nation on earth, most powerful in all history—and a model the whole world imitates. *What made them so sure?*—the settlers and colonists, the Founding Fathers and all the generations that intervened before America emerged as a world power in the 20th century? What made them so certain that America would become a light of the world, the shining city on a hill? What made John Adams say, in 1765, "I always consider the settlement of America with reverence and wonder, as the opening of a grand scene and design in Providence"? What made Abraham Lincoln call America (in 1862, in the middle of a ruinous civil war) "the last, best hope of earth"?

We know of people who are certain of their destinies from childhood on. But *nations?*

Many things made all these Americans and proto-Americans sure; and to some extent they were merely guessing and hoping. But one thing above all made them true prophets. They read the Bible. Winthrop, Adams, Lincoln, and thousands of others found a good destiny in the Bible and made it their own. They read about Israel's covenant with God and took it to heart: *They* were Israel. ("Wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke," said Winthrop. "Wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us.") They read about God's chosen people and took it to heart: *They* were God's chosen people, or—as Lincoln put it—God's "*almost* chosen people." The Bible as they interpreted it told them what they could be and *would* be. Unless we read the Bible, American history is a closed book.

Evidently young Americans don't know much about the Bible (or anything else, come to think of it; that's another story). But let's not kid ourselves—this problem will be hard to attack. It's clear that any public school that teaches about America must teach about the Bible, from outside. But teaching the Bible from inside (reading Scripture, not just *about* Scripture) is trickier. You don't have to believe in the mythical "wall of separation" between church and state—which the Bill of Rights never mentions and had no intention of erecting—to understand that Americans don't want their public schools teaching Christianity or Judaism.

But *can* you teach the Bible as mere "literature" without flattening and misrepresenting it? How will you address the differences (which go right down to the ground) between Jews and Christians respecting the Bible? (The question is not so much how to spare Jewish sensibilities—minorities have rights, but so do majorities; the question is how to tell the truth.) What kind of parents leave their children's Bible education to the public schools, anyway? How do we go beyond public schools in attacking a nationwide problem of Bible illiteracy?

Tricky questions.

American history starts with the emergence of Puritanism in 16th-century Britain. The Bible was central to the founding and development of Puritanism. It was central to the emergence of modern Britain in the 16th and 17th centuries—and modern Britain was important in turn to America and to the whole world.

"Puritan" has been an insult for hundreds of years. (Where are the revisionists when you need one?) It suggests rigid, austere, censorious—exactly the kind of religion that secularists love to hate. The Puritans *were* rigid and censorious to a point; most caricatures are partly true. But mainly they were Christians who hoped to worship God with their whole lives, body and soul; with a dazzling fervor that still lights up their journals, letters, and poetry 300 years later. In the early 18th century the young Jonathan Edwards (eventually one of America's greatest theologians) writes of being "wrapped and swallowed up in God." "The Puritans wanted that fullness of life that made David dance before the ark" (thus J.D. Dow in 1897). America was born in a passionate spiritual explosion. The explosion was created and fueled by the Bible.

The invention of printing in the mid-15th century, and the Protestant Reformation in the early 16th—whose central idea was that Scripture and not human theological doc-

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trine must be decisive for Christianity—created an English Bible-reading craze. The masses were hungry for literature, and religion was the hottest topic on the agenda. Already in Henry VIII's reign (1509-47), the Bible was "disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern," according to the king himself—who was not happy about it. The Bible was a radical, subversive book.

English Bible translations date back to medieval times. (In fact earlier: The first translation, into Anglo-Saxon rather than English proper, was a word-by-word crib added to the Latin of the circa-700 Lindisfarne Gospel Book—one of history's most sublimely beautiful manuscripts and greatest artworks.) But translating the Bible into English was no mere literary act. It was a controversial theological declaration. Religious reformers saw the English Bible as nothing less than a direct connection between ordinary Christian believers and the Lord. Putting the Scripture into English was sacred work; some were willing to die for it. They were opposed by such Roman Catholic stalwarts as Sir Thomas More, who expressed a widely held view when he proclaimed it "pestilential heresy" to think that "we should believe nothing but plain Scripture."

The English Bible as we know it begins with John Wycliffe's work in the late 14th century. Wycliffe preached the primacy of the Bible and founded the Lollards' movement, which in many ways harks forward to the Protestant Reformation. When he died in 1384, Wycliffe's English Bible was nearly complete. But his translation was banned in 1408, and the Lollards (who had become revolutionaries of a sort) were brutally suppressed. Many were burnt alive with Bibles hung around their necks.

In the early 16th century the next great English translator, William Tyndale, announced to a learned theologian that "ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth the plough to know more of the scripture than thou dost." Tyndale was inspired by Luther and dedicated to the task of producing an up-to-date English Bible. The English church denounced him; he fled to the continent. He was declared a heretic nonetheless, arrested near Brussels, and executed in 1536.

Henry VIII banned Tyndale's translation for its alleged Protestant tendencies, but promised the nation a religiously acceptable English Bible. Meanwhile he brought Protestantism to England in his own idiosyncratic way. From Henry's time onward, the English Bible was an established fact of English life. In his exhaustive analysis (1941), Charles Butterworth ranks Tyndale's the early version that contributed most to the King James Bible. The Geneva Bible ranks a close second. It was published in 1560, two years into the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth," writes the historian John Richard Green in a famous passage (1874). "England became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible." Religious reformers, inspired by continental Protestants as well as the Bible itself, became dissatisfied with the Church of England—which was closely associated with the monarchy. They found it too popish, too fancy-shmancy, insufficiently "purified"; too removed from the Bible. They wanted a *biblical* Christianity.

People called the reformers Puritans. Most were Congregationalist or Presbyterian but some were Baptist, Quaker, or something else; some never left the Church of England. (Denominations weren't as sharply defined as they are today. Nor did they stand for the same theological positions. Early Quakers, for example, weren't necessarily pacifist.)

Elizabeth tolerated the Puritans. But things changed when the Virgin Queen died and the Stuarts came to power. On succeeding Elizabeth, James I announced that he would make the Puritans "conform themselves or I will harry them out of the land." He meant it. Persecuted Puritans set sail in rising numbers for the New World.

The Geneva Bible became and remained the Puritans' favorite. It had marginal notes that Puritans liked—but King James and the Church of England deemed them obnoxious. The notes were anti-monarchy and pro-republic—"untrue, seditious, and savouring too much of dangerous and traitorous conceits," the king said. Under his sponsorship a new Bible was prepared (without interpretive notes) by 47 of the best scholars in the land. The King James version appeared in 1611—intended merely as a modest improvement over previous translations. But it happened to be a literary masterpiece of stupendous proportions. Purely on artistic grounds it ranks with Homer, Dante, Shakespeare— Western literature's greatest achievements. In terms of influence and importance, it flattens the other three.

"The Bible was central to [Britain's] intellectual as well as moral life in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries," writes Christopher Hill (1993). "The effect of the continual domestic study" of the Bible, according to the eminent historian G.M. Trevelyan (1926), "was greater than that of any literary movement in our annals"—in fact was greater (he adds) than that of any *religious* movement since the arrival of Christianity in Britain. "The Bible in English history," he writes, "may be regarded as a 'Renaissance' of Hebrew literature far more widespread and more potent than even the Classical Renaissance."

We aren't discussing a merely "popular" or "influential" book. We are talking revolution. In 16th and 17th-century Britain, the English Bible was capable of affecting the first

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thoughts people had on waking, their last thoughts before sleeping, their dreams, and their nightmares. British homes were *decorated* biblically—with Bible quotations or pictures painted or papered on the walls or printed on cloth wall-hangings. British life grew and flourished on a biblical trellis. Centuries later, Quiller-Couch wrote of the Bible in Britain that "it is in everything we see, hear, feel, because it is in us, in our blood."

Archbishop Laud, high church and bitterly anti-Puritan, made life even harder for the Puritans under Charles I, who followed James. James and Charles had picked a fight that would continue in one form or another almost till the end of the 17th century—a period that includes the English Civil War, the execution of Charles I, the Puritan Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell as "Lord Protector," the restoration of the Stuart kings, and their final booting-out in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. When the smoke cleared, Britain was transformed: Parliament's power had been established forever; absolute monarchy had been permanently rejected.

Friction between Puritans and the Church of England was a major cause of the Civil War (1642-51)—which in turn was a major shaping event of the modern world. Parliament and the Puritans (to strip things down to essentials) rebelled against King Charles I and the Church of England. The Bible figured heavily on both sides, especially among the Puritans. The Puritan army was famous for chanting psalms. Oliver Cromwell once halted his army during a hot pursuit so they could all chant psalm 117 together. (He was a fine general; 117 is a short psalm.) The biblical passage in which Samuel warns the Israelites of the nightmare dangers of kingship was a natural Puritan favorite. The idea of a "Covenant with God," the whole population swearing loyalty to the Lord, was important too. (But the Bible was crucial across the theological and political spectrum. "Although the Puritans were great Psalm-singers, they were not as prominent in the writing of literary Meditations based on the Psalms as were the moderate Anglicans," for example—thus the critic and historian Harold Fisch, 1964.)

In 2002, Fania Oz-Salzberger published a major paper documenting the Hebrew Bible's influence on such seminal British political thinkers of the period as John Selden, Thomas Hobbes, and John Locke. They all agreed, writes Oz-Salzberger, that "the people of Israel had a republic, a nearly perfect republic, from the time of the Exodus until at least the coronation of Saul. . . . And precisely because of its transcendent origin, it was an exemplary state of law and a society dedicated to social justice and republican liberty."

John Locke is often described as the most important philosophical influence on the American revolution. Locke believed in a "social contract" in which citizens swap some freedom for a civilized life: Everyone's freedom is curtailed, and everyone benefits. The results are civil society and the state. Locke relied heavily on the Bible. For Locke, writes Richard Ashcraft (1987), "the Bible was the primary source for any endeavor to supply a 'historical' account of man's existence."

After the 1600s, the Bible declined as a political hot topic in Britain, but all sorts of evidence attests to the nation's continuing tendency to see itself as ancient Israel reborn—with an exalted destiny and special relationship to the Almighty. In 1719, for example, Isaac Watts published a bestselling translation of the Psalms—in which references to "Israel" were replaced by the words "Great Britain." When Georg Friedrich Händel settled in London, he determined (naturally) to do things British-style. Thus a long series of oratorios—*Esther*, *Deborah*, *Judas Maccabeus*, *Joshua*, *Susannah*, *Jephtha*, *Israel in Egypt*—all presupposing that Britain was the new Israel.

The Bible's influence on British literature was profound. The work of John Milton, peerless semi-Puritan poet and political agitator, would have been inconceivable without the Bible—"that book within whose sacred context all wisdom is enfolded," he wrote in 1642. Wordsworth said of Milton's poetry, "However imbued the surface might be with classical literature, he was a Hebrew in soul; all things tended in him towards the sublime." (The first-century Greek who is now called "Pseudo-Longinus"—real name uncertain—got this ball rolling when he famously associated "sublimity" with the Hebrew bible, especially the start of Genesis.)

The Bible continued as a vital influence on English literature through William Blake and the romantics and (of course) even farther, down to our own day. In the literature of ancient Greece, Samuel Taylor Coleridge announced, "all natural objects were *dead*, mere hollow statues," whereas "in the Hebrew poets each thing has a life of its own." In the Bible "I have found," he wrote, "words for my inmost thoughts, songs for my joy, utterances for my hidden griefs. . . ." In certain of Lord Byron's *Hebrew Melodies* (poems to be sung to Hebrew tunes), the poet captures not only the mood but the subject matter of the biblical *Song of Songs*—"She walks in beauty, like the night / Of cloudless climes and starry skies; / And all that's best of dark and bright / Meet in her aspect and her eyes. . . ." Examples of the Bible's centrality to English literature are countless.

Meanwhile, Anglican settlers founded Jamestown, Virginia, in 1607; Pilgrims arriving on the *Mayflower* founded Plymouth in 1620. Boston and Salem, 1630. The goal of the early Puritan

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settlers, writes the historian Sidney Ahlstrom, was "a Holy Commonwealth standing in a national covenant with its Lord." Ahlstrom mentions also that "an 'Anglicanism' deeply colored by Puritan convictions would shape the early religious life of Virginia"; so it seems fair to describe the first stages of the invention of America as a basically Puritan affair. The early settlers founded a series of colleges to provide them with pastors and theologians, starting with Harvard in 1636. By 1700, a quarter of a million ex-Europeans and their descendants lived in the future United States.

America's earliest settlers came in search of religious freedom, to escape religious persecution—vitally important facts that Americans tend increasingly to forget. A new arrival who joined the Pilgrims at Plymouth in 1623 "blessed God for the opportunity of freedom and liberty to enjoy the ordinances of God in purity among His people." America was a haven for devoutly religious dissidents. It is a perfect reflection of the nation's origins that the very first freedom in the Bill of Rights—Article one, part one—should be religious freedom. "Separation of church and state" was a means to an end, not an end in itself. The idea that the Bill of Rights would one day be traduced into a broom to sweep religion out of the public square like so much dried mud off the boots of careless children would have left the Founders of this nation (my guess is) trembling in rage. We owe it to them in simple gratitude to see that the Bill of Rights is not—is *never*—used as a weapon against religion.

You cannot understand the literature and experience of 17th-century American Puritans unless you know the Bible. The Pilgrim father William Bradford reports in his famous journal, for example, that his people had no choice but to camp near their landing-place on the Massachusetts mainland. There was no reason to think they could do better elsewhere; after all they could not, "as it were, go up to the top of Pisgah to view from this wilderness a more goodly country."

Bradford saw no need to explain that he was referring to Moses gazing at the Promised Land from atop Mount Pisgah before his death (Deuteronomy 34:1). To 17th-century readers, the reference would have been obvious—and so too the implied message: These Pilgrims are like biblical Israelites. They are a chosen people who made a dangerous crossing from the house of (British) bondage to a Promised Land of freedom. Other Puritan settlers expressed themselves in similar terms. There is a fascinating resemblance between these Puritan writings and the Hebrew literary form called "melitzah," in which the author makes his point by stringing together Biblical and rabbinic passages. The Puritans' world, like traditional Jewish society, was permeated and obsessed with the Bible.

Bradford's comparison between Puritans and ancient Israel is central to the American revolution and the emergence of the new nation. Americans saw themselves as Israelites throwing off a tyrant's yoke. Most historians look to the British and Continental philosophers of the Enlightenment, Locke especially, as the major intellectual influence on America's Founding Fathers and revolutionary generation. To rely on Locke is to rely (indirectly) on the Bible. Yet the Bible itself, straight up, was the most important revolutionary text of all. Consider the seal of the United States designed by a committee of the Continental Congress consisting of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson. (They don't make congressional committees like they used to!) Their proposed seal shows Israel crossing the Red Sea, with the motto "Rebellion to kings is obedience to God." The pastor Abiel Abbot proclaimed in 1799, "It has been often remarked that the people of the United States come nearer to a parallel with Ancient Israel, than any other nation upon the globe. Hence OUR AMERICAN ISRAEL is a term frequently used; and our common consent allows it apt and proper."

That Britain and America should both have been inclined to see themselves as chosen peoples made a subterranean connection between them that has sometimes—one suspects—been plainer to their enemies than their friends. Down to the war in Iraq, enemies of America and Britain have suspected an Anglo-Saxon conspiracy to rule the world. In part this is paranoia; but it might also have something to do with Britain's and America's Bible-centered cultural histories. The two nations speak of a "special relationship" with each other—besides which, each has a history of believing in its own "special relationship" with the Lord Himself.

The Bible continued to shape American history. Some Americans saw the great push westward as fulfilling the Lord's plan for the United States, modeled on Israel's settlement of the holy land. Meanwhile, many have noticed that the history of modern Israel resembles earlier American experience. Harassed Europeans arrive in a sparsely settled land in search of freedom. They build the place up and make it bloom. They struggle with the indigenous inhabitants, some of whom are friendly and some not. At first they collaborate with the British colonial authorities; each group winds up in a push for independence and a deadly fight with Britain.

But long before Israel resembled America, America resembled Israel. It's true that Manifest Destiny—the idea that America was predestined to push westwards towards

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Photographs by CORBIS

One of Edward Hicks's numerous depictions of the "Peaceable Kingdom," illustrating Isaiah 11:6: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

the Pacific—was less a Bible-based than a "natural rights" approach to America's place in God's plans. You didn't have to consult the Bible to learn about America's Manifest Destiny; it was just obvious. But America was called back to her biblical faith by no less a man than Abraham Lincoln himself.

As the Civil War approached, both North and South saw their positions in biblical terms. Southern preachers sometimes accused abolitionists of being atheists in disguise. Lincoln rose above this kind of dispute. "In the present civil war it is quite possible," he wrote in 1862, "that God's purpose is something different from the purpose of either party."

Lincoln was America's most "biblical" president—"no president has ever had the detailed knowledge of the Bible that Lincoln had," writes the historian William Wolf. Lincoln turned to the Bible more and more frequently and fervently as the war progressed. His heterodox but profound Christianity showed him how to understand the war as a fight to redeem America's promise to mankind. Lincoln never joined a church, but said often that he would join one if "the Saviour's summary of the Gospel" were its only creed. He meant the passage in Mark and Luke where Jesus restates God's requirements in terms of two edicts from the Hebrew Bible: to love God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Lincoln's religion was deeply biblical—and characteristically American.

In modern times the Bible was no less important as a shaper and molder of American destiny. Woodrow Wilson, another intensely biblical president, spoke in biblical terms when he took America into the First World War—on behalf of freedom and democracy for all mankind. Harry Truman's Bible-centered Christianity was important to his decisions to lead America into the Cold War, and make America the first nation to recognize the newborn state of Israel—to the vast disgust of the perpetually benighted State Department. Reagan's presidency revolved around Winthrop's Gospel-inspired image of the sacred city on a hill. George W. Bush's worldwide war on tyranny is the quintessence of a biblical project—one that sees America as an almost chosen people, with the heavy responsibilities that go with the job.

There is no agreement whether God created the world, but the Bible's awe-striking creative powers are undeniable. There is no agreement whether God "is not a man that He should lie" (Numbers 23:19), but the Hebrew Bible's uncanny honesty respecting Israel and its many sins is plain. The faithful ask, in the words of the 139th psalm, "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? or whither

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shall I flee from Thy presence?" And answer, "If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me." Secularists don't see it that way; but the Bible's penetration into the farthest corners of the known world is simple fact. Most contemporary philosophers and culture critics are barely aware of these things, don't see the pattern behind them, can't tell us what the pattern means, and (for the most part) don't care.

* * *

The *Bible Literacy Report: What Do American Teens Need to Know and What Do They Know?* was commissioned by a nonprofit organization called the Bible Literacy Project; it was published April 26. Students in the Gallup-conducted survey were mostly in 7th through 9th grades; they were enrolled at 30 public and 4 private schools (one Catholic, one Protestant, and 2 nonsectarian). Forty-one teachers took part—"a diverse sample of high school English teachers in 10 states." All are reputedly "among the best teachers in their subject."

These teachers are convinced that students *ought* to know the Bible and don't. Forty of forty-one agreed that "Bible knowledge confers a distinct educational advantage." But the majority estimated that fewer than a quarter of their current students are "Bible literate."

Contrary to what a person might guess, the teachers don't necessarily believe that Bible literacy has declined in recent decades. They describe a complex picture; naturally, individuals differ. (One teacher said that "Pentecostal kids or religious Muslim kids" seem better-informed than the others.)

The teachers are strikingly confused about the legal status of Bible-teaching in public schools. The ACLU and kindred organizations are winning the fight to suppress religion in public—to ban it from the public square as religion has traditionally been banned under regimes that tolerate it only marginally; to force it indoors and under wraps, as minority religions have traditionally been treated by powerful majorities that threaten violence. The ACLU and friends are winning by court order and—more important—by confusion and intimidation. "It was not uncommon," says the report, "for educators to hold erroneous beliefs about the legality of using the Bible and Bible literature in public-school classrooms."

Another of the report's sobering aspects has to do with the Bible topics deemed by teachers to be important. Mostly these are people and stories, not ideas. The report lists 72 biblical "items" that the teachers consider essential. The list starts: "Ten Commandments, Cain and Abel, Christ, Genesis, Jesus, Adam and Eve, Bible, Moses, David and Goliath"—and so on. Not what you would call challenging stuff. From the special viewpoint of American history, it seems to me you would rate four biblical "items" essential: Exodus, Covenant, and the related ideas of Promised Land and Chosen People. Two of these appear on the teachers' list; Covenant and Chosen People don't make the cut. This is no criticism of the teachers or the report, merely a sad reflection of the collapse of our educational standards across the board. It used to be that *young* children learned Bible stories and Bible basics. They didn't need high school teachers to bring them up to speed on the Ten Commandments.

Now let's consider the actual results. What *do* high school students know?

The good news: If you ask questions that are so simple the average arthropod would find them patronizing, *and* cast them in multiple choice format to make things even easier . . . American high school students do okay. Almost three-quarters (72 percent) of students in the survey could answer correctly that Moses "led the Israelites out of bondage." Ninety percent could tell you that Adam and Eve were the first man and woman in Genesis. Sixty-nine percent figured out that "the Good Samaritan" was "someone who helps others." Break out the champagne!

On second thought . . . "Significant minorities of American students have not yet achieved even this rudimentary level of Bible knowledge." "Eight percent of American teens," for example, "believe that Moses is one of the twelve Apostles."

Go beyond rudimentary and you find that "very few American students" have the level of Bible knowledge that high-school English teachers regard as "basic to a good education." "Almost two-thirds of teens" couldn't pick the right answer out of four choices when they were asked to identify "a quotation from the Sermon on the Mount" ("Blessed are the poor in spirit"). Two-thirds didn't know that "the Road to Damascus is where St. Paul was blinded by a vision of Christ." Fewer than a third "could correctly identify which statement about David was not true (David tried to kill King Saul)." And so on.

What to do? Every school that teaches American history *must* teach the Bible's central role. Easily said; but experience suggests that many of today's classes in English and U.S. history are stuck somewhere between useless and harmful. High school history and English curricula ought to be rebuilt from scratch right now, on an emergency basis. Those rebuilt curricula should (of course) teach students about the centrality of the Bible.

But students need to *read* the Bible, not just about the

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Bible. High school Bible-as-literature electives are rare and controversial. Not long ago Frankenmuth, Michigan, became (briefly) famous when its school board refused to allow such an elective.

There are good reasons to be wary of such courses. There is nothing wrong with them on constitutional grounds, and the Bible Literacy Project has reasonable, serious curricula of its own on offer. But these courses have to keep well clear of teaching the Bible as a sacred text, or promoting religious views of any kind. And it happens that nearly all of the smartest, deepest readers of the Bible through the ages have approached it from a religious direction. No doubt their views can be worked in somehow, but in how natural a way? And won't they be a lot easier just to skip?

And those in favor of such courses should be aware of their bleak history—specifically, the bleak history of Bible teaching that refuses to treat the Bible as sacred scripture. The German "higher critics," starting with Julius Wellhausen in the late 19th century, picked the Bible to pieces like vultures addressing a dead cow. They were always ready to invent a new "source," never quite able to see the point—to understand Scripture as loving readers do. Being in love with a book doesn't guarantee that you will succeed as a critic. But not being in love guarantees that you will fail. (One reason "deconstructionism" is the least successful critical approach in modern history.)

When I was a graduate student in Bible studies during the long-ago late 1970s, this particular fight was raging. (Fights are nearly always raging in Bible studies.) Scholars such as Brevard Childs of Yale were struggling to wrest the Bible from the palsied grip (which looked a lot like a choke-hold) of higher critics who could tell you nearly everything about the Bible, in academic German as charming and graceful as Blutwurst, *except* what the words actually meant. The new "canonical critics" (such as Childs himself) were struggling to put the Bible back into the religious context out of which it had been untimely ripped by profoundly irritating Germans.

So let's have Bible-as-literature electives in every public high school, by all means. But let's also face facts: These are hard courses to teach at best. Do we have teachers who are up to the job? (With laudable foresight, the Bible Literacy Project is already developing workshops for teachers.) And let's also keep in mind that, for most children, such courses can only be half-way houses. Children studying the Bible should learn their own religious traditions as precious truth, not as one alternative on a multicultural list.

Teaching precious religious truth is not what America's public schools are for. Ultimately there is only one solution to our Bible literacy crisis. Our churches, our synagogues, and all other institutions that revere the Bible must do better. How well *are* they doing? To judge by the new report, lousy. (Of course some are doing a lot better than others.)

It's impossible to find one global solution to the problem of Bible teaching in America. But it's easy to find one global hope. America is fertile ground for Great Awakenings—mass movements in which large chunks of the population return to their religious roots. We haven't had one for awhile; we are overdue. Great Awakenings are big, dramatic events that take off like rockets and burn out like rockets, after brief but spectacular careers. Even so, many people find in the aftermath that their life-trajectories have been changed forever.

The next Great Awakening will presumably be centered in the Protestant community—but will deal in friendship with America's other religious communities. To have a Great Awakening, you need a great talker. (To change people's ideas about religion and the Bible and God, you have to look them in the eye and speak to them from the heart.)

My guess is that our next Great Awakening will begin among college students. College students today are (spiritually speaking) the driest timber I have ever come across. Mostly they know little or nothing about religion; little or nothing about Americanism. Mostly no one ever speaks to them about truth and beauty, or nobility or honor or greatness. They are empty—spiritually bone dry—because no one has ever bothered to give them anything spiritual that is worth having. Platitudes about diversity and tolerance and multiculturalism are thin gruel for intellectually growing young people.

Let the right person speak to them, and they will turn back to the Bible with an excitement and exhilaration that will shake the country. In reading the Bible they will feel as if they are going home—which is just what they will be doing. Nothing would do America more good than a biblical homecoming.

What has the Bible been to this country? In 1630, John Winthrop repeated Moses' instructions: "Lett us choose life." How to do it? By reading and obeying the Bible, above all "the Counsell of Micah"—"to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God." Americans (by and large) have done their best to follow Winthrop's instructions. If they haven't always succeeded—if America has managed at times to be a profoundly sinful nation (which is no less than the Bible expects of all nations)—they have also tried hard to be good. They have tried hard to choose life. And the Bible has been as good as its own word (Proverbs 3:18)—"It is a Tree of Life to them that lay hold of it." ♦

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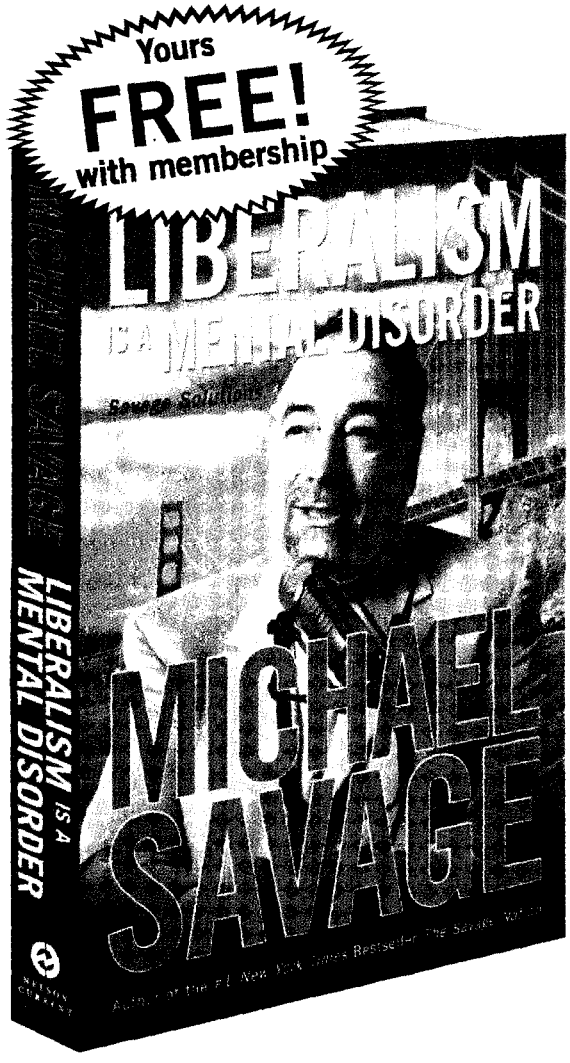
Michael Savage diagnoses "the mental disorder of liberalism" — and offers a comprehensive cure-all



With grit, guts, and gusto, Michael Savage has made his talk show ***The Savage Nation*** a must-hear by fearlessly telling it like it is. Night after night, Savage savages today's rabid liberalism with verve and precision, speaking truths that other public figures are too politically correct or afraid to say. In his new book, ***Liberalism Is a Mental Disorder***, he lays it on the line: "You will not have a nation," he says, "unless you awaken to the reality that America has become pacified; America has become feminized; and America is being compromised from without and within. You cannot let them get away with this. Can America be saved? Is it too late? I believe that with God's will and with your determination to confront the mental disorder of liberalism whenever and wherever it is found, America can both survive and thrive." In this book, he shows how.

In this third installment of his bold, biting, and bestselling trilogy, Savage offers provocative and practical ways to reclaim our social, political, and cultural integrity. Through a compelling narrative of current trends and events, Savage chronicles the continued assault on the sacred pillars of American life (the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Ten Commandments, the Sanctity of Marriage) by the High Priests of Ultra-Liberalism. In each chapter, the Savage Spotlight of Truth casts its brilliant light on the tactics used by liberals to spread their leftist agenda. Savage follows his analysis with specific actions, arguments, and recommendations for action that the reader can ingest to counter the radical left.

Savage has long insisted that America's best days are in front of her — if only we have the guts to face the truth and apply ourselves to repairing the foundation upon which this blessed nation was formed. The doctor is in and the diagnosis is clear: in ***Liberalism Is a Mental Disorder***, Michael Savage provides a remedy to help freedom-loving Americans effectively medicate the mental disease of modern liberalism and restore America's former brilliance.

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Reagan in Retrospect

How the 40th president looks to history

BY STEVEN F. HAYWARD

There are at least three major cycles to the historical process of judging presidents. There is the initial summation upon leaving office. Then there is a reappraisal period, when we start to recall the unappreciated virtues of these men, and when previously secret documents and circumstances shed new light on a president's designs and actions. And finally there is revisionism, which has epicycles of its own.

Modern presidents usually fare poorly in the initial summation upon leaving office: Harry Truman was unpopular, Dwight Eisenhower was a dunce, Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter, and George H.W. Bush were failures, while Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton were something worse. Ronald Reagan, though still popular with the American people in 1989, got the usual rough treatment during his first few years out of office. While he may have restored America's morale, critics said, he was an out-of-touch man whose ruinous economic policies spelled doom for the next generation.

Morning in America
How Ronald Reagan Invented the 1980s
by Gil Troy
Princeton University Press, 417 pp., $29.95

The Eighties
America in the Age of Reagan
by John Ehrman
Yale University Press, 296 pp., $27.50

The Reagan reappraisal began early, with the collapse of communism, and culminated with the stunning revelations of Reagan's own extensive writings, which showed not only an active mind but one more engaged than the critics (and even some friends) imagined. While the diehard anti-anti-Communists still resist acknowledging Reagan's role in ending the Cold War, the preponderance of evidence is producing another landslide for the Gipper.

This leaves Reagan's role in domestic matters as the main free-fire zone for historical argument as Reagan now enters the revisionist cycle of historical evaluation. The liberal charge that Reagan was midwife to a "decade of greed" stuck to him for several years after he left office. Indeed, Bill Clinton prominently embraced the theme in his 1992 campaign; but the spectacle of the dot-com boom and bust in the 1990s made 1980s materialism appear minor league (but more solid) by comparison.

This hasn't stopped liberals who decried the 1980s as the "decade of greed" from labeling the 1990s "the

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fortunate decade," since their guy was in power. Just as the ongoing historical arguments about the New Deal are a proxy for the contemporary partisan debate over the role of government, we are now set to argue for decades about the 1980s because it is the fulcrum for the conservative challenge to post-New Deal liberalism.

Two new books wade into the thicket, and offer sharply contrasting views of the 1980s. In *Morning in America*, Gil Troy, a historian at McGill University, offers a cultural history of the Reagan years, making much out of forgotten totems such as *Hill Street Blues*, *The Big Chill*, and the new Coke. Troy chose this course in hopes of finding "a more synthetic, less politicized approach" to Reagan and his times, but he came up with a book that seems to have been more calculated to keep his faculty club membership in good standing. If *Morning in America* were dissected into a detailed schematic, it would have more balancing tests than a Supreme Court opinion. When summed up, however, the balance of Troy's judgment that "for better or worse, we live in a Reaganized America" comes down predominantly on the side of "worse."

On the one hand, Troy assures us that Reagan "had depth . . . Reagan was a thinker, a writer, an engaged politician." Reagan was bold and possessed "visionary pragmatism." His intelligence shined through in the epic 1981 legislative fight over his economic program, he showed skill in foreign policy, and he "saved the presidency from irrelevance." But Troy's denigrations dominate the overall picture. The same Reagan who is an intelligent visionary also has a "childlike *Being There* dimension," whose success owed to "saccharine political appeal" and public ignorance.

Troy validates the premise of nearly every eighties-era liberal caricature and complaint about Reagan: He was insouciant and insensitive, a practitioner of "rhetorical inflation," a "celebrity president" whose "triumphalism ushered in an age of excess." Even Reagan's own aides, Troy reminds us, said at the time that he was clueless, doddering, out of touch, and ineffectual—without pausing to consider whether these aides might have tried to exploit the space the modest Reagan left open around him to inflate their own cosmic importance. (It is significant to note, isn't it, that none of Reagan's aides make these remarks today?)

There are lots of contradictory judgments that are difficult to sort out. On one page, we hear of Reagan's incremental centrism, and on the next page we are told of "Reagan's updated, more enlightened version of nineteenth-century Social Darwinism," a silly caricature that hasn't seen much daylight since Haynes Johnson peddled it in *Sleepwalking Through History*. Troy endorses the view that "Reagan helped leach America's 'social capital,' pollute America's 'social ecology,' and diminish Americans' sense of citizenship and community." He ushered in a "new era of greed and ostentation." Troy deprecates the prideful flag-waving that occurred in the 1980s as superficial and jingoistic rather than as a meaningful indicator of renewed citizenship. The prosperity of the 1980s was mostly an illusion—Paul Krugman told us so!—that the new Gilded Age soaps like *Dynasty* and *Dallas* abetted. (Troy's account of supply-side economics is completely botched, though given the Jesuitical fissures among supply-siders, this is forgivable.)

And yet, with all this ruin and moral decay, at the end Troy concludes that "all kinds of things actually improved [in the 1980s]. There was also a community-mindedness, an altruism, a goodness that was and remains characteristically American." So, where are we supposed to come down on the 1980s? It doesn't help when Troy says things such as the decade generated a "mass epidemic of psychic distress" without offering a single piece of data to substantiate—or even explain—this kind of sweeping assertion.

Troy's efforts to minimize Reagan can be best seen in his recurrent formulation that Reagan's contribution to a positive trend was "mostly negative." A good example is inflation, where Troy writes that "Reagan's achievement was mostly negative—he let the Fed do its job," partly through "his natural passivity." While narrowly true, this shows Troy's churlishness. As Milton Friedman has remarked repeatedly, "No other president would have stood by and let [Paul] Volcker push the economy into recession by restricting the money supply so sharply," which suggests a positive rather than a negative quality. And no one familiar with the story of Reagan's first meeting with Volcker in early 1981 would use the word "passive" to describe Reagan's relationship with the Fed.

In sharp contrast to *Morning in*

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America, John Ehrman's *The Eighties: America in the Age of Reagan* offers a more controlled narrative that has the added benefit of copious references and real data to substantiate its judgments. The best way of grasping the gulf between *Morning in America* and *The Eighties* is to see how each book handles an important anomaly of the Reagan story. Both books note that Reagan's 1980 electoral vote landslide obscured the fact that he assumed office with the lowest public approval ratings of any incoming president ever. Troy notes that "Reagan lacked the mandate for change that most people thought he now had," while Ehrman similarly writes that "the belief that Reagan's victory represented the start of a revolution overstated the case." The 1980 vote, both authors note, was more a repudiation of Carter than an affirmative mandate for Reagan.

But could not the same have been said of Franklin Roosevelt's victory over Herbert Hoover in 1932, especially since FDR campaigned on an orthodox platform of balancing the budget that gave no hint of the shape of the New Deal to come? In sharp contrast to FDR, Reagan came to office with the best-defined and best-advertised governing program of any incoming president in the 20th century. Troy writes that "the president-elect had set off to create a mandate—or an illusion of one—that the voters had refused to provide." A few pages later he adds, "The American people had not given him the mandate he sought, so he conjured one up."

Troy's word choices—"illusion" and "conjure"—make it seem as though American voters had no idea how Reagan would govern (or were perhaps against it), and that Reagan generated his impressive political momentum by some kind of legerdemain.

Realignments are determined by whether the winning party coming out of an election produces a new governing philosophy that enables it to win an enduring majority in successive elections. It is impossible to make out from Troy's manifold contradictions where he comes down on this question. Ehrman sets up his consideration of how Reagan generated his political momentum with an excellent synopsis of the collapse of liberalism in the 1960s and 1970s. Ehrman understands that a large part of the reason for Reagan's soft incoming poll numbers was the ideological vacuum in American politics that was open for Reagan to fill.

Where Troy sees "conjuring" and imagery, Ehrman sees a substantial governing philosophy being asserted. Ehrman argues by the end of his book that Reagan succeeded in establishing conservatism as the dominant political ideology in America: "At the start of the 1980s, conservatism had been the home of political outsiders. At the end of the decade, it dominated American politics and set the country's agenda, while liberalism searched for a way to confront it effectively." He is careful to qualify this judgment with the proper caveats about the nonideological nature of American politics and the gradual nature of change in American public life.

Along with his supple political judgments, Ehrman offers a lucid and balanced assessment of economic issues. He corrects the record or offers contrary evidence on nearly every economic controversy of the time, with the partial exception, oddly enough, of Reagan's income tax rate cuts, whose full effects Ehrman covers much less completely than other issues. But his account sparkles on the budget and trade deficits, the wave of corporate mergers and takeovers, "competitiveness" and industrial policy (which, he shrewdly observes, *hurt* Democrats), income inequality and income mobility, the supposed decline of the middle class, and the Gramm-Rudman deficit act, which he calls "one of the most disgraceful and irresponsible laws ever passed."

Ehrman offers the best discussion of economic issues of the period since Richard McKenzie's 1994 account, *What Went Right in the 1980s*. In contrast to Troy's equivocal conclusions, Ehrman is confident enough to say that "except for the displacement of lower-skilled workers, almost all these [economic] changes left Americans better off at the end of the Reagan years than at their beginning." For his careful judgment of economics alone, Ehrman's work deserves to become one of the standard reference works for the Reagan period, not least for his 69 pages of copious source notes and data tables in the appendix.

Liberals mostly left Reagan alone during the second half of the 1990s and up to his death last year, in part because their energies were absorbed propping up Bill Clinton and attacking George W. Bush, and in part because his tragic illness put him off limits, to a certain extent. The rapid, favorable reappraisal of Reagan that occurred as we learned of his original writings and appreciated anew his achievements would not go unchallenged for very long, however. The contrast between *Morning in America* and *The Eighties* shows that the revisionist wars over Reagan and his legacy will be just as divisive and acrimonious as the contemporary arguments were during that decade. ♦

Bettmann / CORBIS

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War of the Words

How the idea of the OED was translated into fact.

BY PAUL DEAN

The *Oxford English Dictionary* was long regarded as an Olympian production, ruling with impersonal finality on all aspects of English usage. The driving force behind its compilation, Sir James Murray (1837-1915), was the subject of an affectionate memoir by his granddaughter Kathleen Murray, *Caught in the Web of Words* (1977), which threw light on his working practices; more recently, in *The Meaning of Everything* (2003), Simon Winchester studied the dictionary itself. Now Lynda Mugglestone, making use of hitherto unexamined proof sheets of the dictionary, and of Murray's personal papers in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, has filled out and fruitfully complicated our picture of this great lexicographical achievement, giving it a more human face.

Getty Images / Rischgitz

James Murray

Lost for Words
The Hidden History of the Oxford English Dictionary
by Lynda Mugglestone
Yale University Press, 266 pp., $30

The original contract for the *New English Dictionary*, as it was then called, was signed in 1879. It stipulated four volumes, expected to be complete within ten years. In fact, the final volume appeared in 1928, by which time 50 million words had been defined in nearly 15,500 pages. Work had already started on supplementary volumes, of which five appeared between 1933 and 1986; the online edition has been available since 2000, and is constantly updated. How Murray, laboring among his pigeonholes of thousands of handwritten submissions from a host of contributors, would have envied our modern researchers their databases!

Decisions about what to include in, and what to exclude from, the dictionary, and about how to define what was included, tormented the editorial team. Not only some of them, but also the Delegates of the University Press, to whom Murray was responsible, deprecated the acceptance of scientific terms, slang and jargon, and "Americanisms," and urged drastic curtailment of the scope of definitions and illustrative quotations, for which they advocated a terminal limit of 1900. There was a constant battle between Murray's perfectionism and the commercial imperatives of his publishers. Alterations were still being made at proof stage, with fresh evidence constantly coming to hand; entries were redrafted, expanded, abbreviated, or thrown out entirely. The apparently simple word "do," for example, occupied 17 columns and cost Murray six months' work. The editors disagreed over the spelling, pronunciation, and etymology of many words. Some were found to be nonexistent: "Abacot," enshrined since 1721 in Samuel Johnson's and Noah Webster's dictionaries among others, and defined as "a cap of state . . . worn anciently by the kings of England," turned out to be a misprint of "bycocket," a headdress.

Other words carried ideological baggage. "Chief" was defined as "the head man . . . of a small uncivilized community"; "blanket" was said to be worn "by savages or destitute persons, for clothing." Equally, many entries were rewritten to eliminate subjective bias. Even the sources of citations were subject to evaluative prejudice, classic authors being preferred to periodicals (a major source of quotations in the Supplements, since new usages are more promptly recorded in the press). Strict rationing was imposed. One contributor, Fitzedward Hall, unearthed over 200 quotations for "hand" and had to be tactfully informed by Murray that "we have to consider the question of space."

Murray had originally stated that the dictionary would contain "every English word whatever." This proved an impossible ideal. What, after all, was "English"? Murray's answer was that it was "a central mass" with "no discernible circumference." Elsewhere he described the language as "a spot of colour on a damp surface, which shades away imperceptibly into the surrounding colourlessness." The dictionary operated on "historical principles," but the fact that its appearance spanned many years meant that it evolved with the language it recorded. Since written usage always lags behind speech, the dates assigned to new senses of many words were far too late. Some words disappeared at the proof stage simply because they were so exotic that they were unlikely ever to be used; casualties included "graiomania" (a passion for all things Greek) and "lericompoop" (verb, "to hoax").

Sexual terminology presented a special problem. There is an endearing story of Dr. Johnson being rebuked by

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two respectable old ladies for including obscenities in his dictionary: "Ah, my dears," he teased, "so you have been looking for them!" Victorians were more prudish, which led to the omission of many words and the labeling of others as "vulgar," "coarse," or used only by "the lowest classes." Still others, innocuous enough, went because they simply could not fit into the available blank space on the sheets of the latest installment. There was room for neither "landscaping" nor "lunching," both of which appeared in supplements with dates of first usage that are simply wrong, their original inclusion having been forgotten.

However, although lexicography could not be a "science," it was assumed that linguistics could. "I am a man of science," Murray declared, comparing himself to an anthropologist. Mugglestone recounts the battles over the place of scientific terminology in the dictionary, which was itself an evolving enterprise, almost on Darwinian lines—indeed, Charles Darwin recognized that "language is an altering element," its everyday words worn smooth like pebbles on the beach, leaving few traces of their origin. For Johnson in 1755, "science" had been primarily "knowledge" and "scientist" a nonexistent word; for the OED team, such matters had proliferated bewilderingly. In a striking anticipation of modern theory, Richard Chenevix Trench cast doubt on the status of scientific terms, which he held to be merely "signs" or "tokens," rather than real words. He and others deprecated their inclusion in what was seen as fundamentally a work of literary reference. Murray smuggled many through, but inevitably others were overlooked, given the dizzying speed with which scientific research developed in the nineteenth century, and the transient currency of some of its neologisms.

A central question confronting any lexicographer is that of description versus prescription. Dictionaries are often appealed to for decisions on "right" and "wrong" usage. Modern linguistics recoils from this, preferring the criterion of appropriateness to context. From the outset, Murray intended the OED to be a record of actual usage, not a legislator in the Johnsonian mold. He resented the letters he received demanding his opinions on spelling or pronunciation ("I am not the editor of the English language"), yet, in print, he had to legislate. Should one put "a historian" or "an historian," "disyllable" or "dissyllable," "rhyme" or "rime"? When did a usage become obsolete? How many dialect words should be included, from which dialects, and on what grounds? Murray's coeditor, Henry Bradley, whose verbal fluency was such that he reputedly never uttered an ungrammatical sentence, fought rearguard actions over "enthuse" (verb), "feasible" (in the sense of "probable"), and many others, in an attempt to fix meaning artificially.

As the new century unfolded, old age and the First World War claimed the lives of many contributors (proofs were read even in the trenches). Paper was scarce, and the rate of printing slowed to a crawl. Murray died in 1915, worn out by incessant toil; he was 78. Thirteen years later, the end of the great work was celebrated by a banquet attended by the prime minister. Murray's daughter Rosfrith, who had helped her father since childhood, was banned from the feast because of her sex, and had to watch the men eat from the balcony. The expansion of the online dictionary may be infinite, but at least its male and female employees can discuss it together over lunch. ♦

Tales of the Left Coast

When the silver screen was red.

BY RON CAPSHAW

When some diligent researcher studies the history of American political wars in the 20th century, he or she will discover that, despite the differing stances, the charges and countercharges (both left and right) achieve a rough consensus by practicing a politicized version of "not in front of the *goyim*." This command, whispered today by party loyalists like Karl Rove and Paul Begala, goes something like this: *Keep all criticisms and doubts about the party within it; display only unity in public, otherwise you are aiding the other side.*

Red Star Over Hollywood
The Film Colony's Long Romance With the Left
by Ronald and Allis Radosh
Encounter, 292 pp., $25.95

It is only fitting that this form of political theater—doubts in the wings camouflaged by handshakes on stage—was performed in Hollywood, and by that most theatrical of political organizations, the American Communist party of the 1930s and '40s. The *goyim* in their minds was quite large, ranging from Leon Trotsky to (depending on the needs of Moscow) Franklin D. Roosevelt to Robert Taft. Throughout Ronald and Allis Radosh's new book, *Red Star Over Hollywood*, the Hollywood Reds speak of a paralyzing fear—not the fear of losing their studio contracts, or being wrong (or right) about Stalin, but the fear that their doubts and criticisms about communism will filter out of party doors and into the propaganda coffers of their gargantuan enemy.

Such a bunker mentality necessitates a variety of roles. Take Dalton Trumbo, a Stalinist screenwriter. By

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The Hollywood Ten
Dalton Trumbo, second from left

Bettmann / CORBIS

day, he acted the part of the dutiful party member, helping prevent reactionary—read Trotskyite—works from making it to the screen, editorially rejecting anti-Communist submissions to the party-dominated *Screenwriter* magazine (arguing that the free airing of ideas leads to fascism), taking to the podium to deny every purge, defend every twist and turn of Soviet policy. But at night, offstage, he read the works he censored (Arthur Koestler, George Orwell, even the hated Leon Trotsky himself) and sensed the carnage of Stalin.

Radosh skillfully shows the behind-the-scenes sentiments of Trumbo and the rest of the Hollywood Ten during the House Un-American Activities Committee investigations in 1947. Before congressional microphones and newsreel cameras, they played the part of civil libertarians defending the Bill of Rights. Off camera, in segregated legal sessions with party lawyers (two of the ten were no longer members and, hence, denied admission), they affirmed the notion that "fascists," a label that covered a large group in the 1947 party dictionary, were ineligible for free speech protections. Even when Trumbo abandoned communism, he still carried the party's fears with him. His 1958 second-thoughts essay was submitted not to the *New Republic* or even the *Nation* but to the safe confines of *Masses and Mainstream.*

Like any good history book, the Radoshes' settles controversies while generating new ones. With new, and *old*, evidence, they show that Hollywood Reds were not merely impatient New Dealers—the portrait of Lillian Hellman in *Julia*—but were Stalinists who regarded the Bill of Rights as selectively applied, and the Soviet Union as the imported model for America. But more than an exposé of the political theater of Hollywood Reds, *Red Star* is an exposé of the political theater that has crossed generations.

Although available, none of the histories of the blacklist penned by Larry Ceplair or Victor Navasky, under the advertisement of fair-minded journalism seeking the truth, have mentioned John Garfield's documented disgust with the party. Instead, he has been portrayed as an unfriendly witness, risking both health and career to associate with "progressives." Nor have they mentioned that Howard Koch, the screenwriter of the pro-purge *Mission to Moscow*, was hardly a "non-communist" (Navasky's words) but a fervent Stalinist who used a technical adviser on the film who was being monitored by American intelligence.

Nor has Christopher Trumbo, who minutely combed his father's papers to script the current Broadway play *Trumbo: Red, White and Blacklisted*, remembered to include the second-thoughts essay. The actors lining up to play the part (Paul Newman, Tim Robbins) have colluded by not honoring the cardinal rule of method acting: research the part.

The question for future scholars that arises from this book is the same as the one applied to the Hollywood Reds: When did they know? Specifically, when did today's left know about Trumbo's second thoughts, Koch's Stalinism, Garfield's disenchantment with the party? We may know why they didn't air such uncomfortable facts: It would have aided the other side.

It is fitting that Ronald Radosh, who has chronicled his own second thoughts about a later left, would unearth those of an earlier generation. It is equally fitting that he never absorbs his subjects' either/or mentality. He is equally hard on both left and right, HUAC and the party. He has sought to uncover the truth, whether it aids the other side or not. ♦

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Ki-Adi-Mundi comes between Yoda and Obi-Wan Kenobi

Lucasfilm Ltd.

Star Wars VI

Naboo, Dooku, and a mission to the Wookiees.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

The final *Star Wars* is, as writer-director George Lucas promised, a tragedy—but it's not the tragedy Lucas thinks it is.

Ever since he began making his second set of *Star Wars* movies a decade ago, Lucas said that *Episode III: Revenge of the Sith* would be the unvarnished story of the young knight Anakin Skywalker's degeneration and conversion into the black-helmeted, black-outfitted Darth Vader, the villain of the first three films. The tale of woe it really tells is that of George Lucas himself, the final chapter in the sad degeneration of a vital, vivid, and highly amusing moviemaker into a dull, solipsistic, and humorless incompetent.

Lucas had more than a quarter of a century to figure out why Anakin Skywalker went bad. And here's what he came up with: Anakin is afraid of losing his wife Padmé in childbirth. Padmé tries to reassure him: "I promise you I won't die in childbirth," she says, offering a touching expression of her faith in the range of health-care services that were available a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away. That over-deliberate line of dialogue is typical of *Revenge of the Sith*, which joins its immediate predecessor *Attack of the Clones* on a very short list of films that deserve to compete for the Worst Script Ever Written.

"Hold me, Anakin!" Padmé tells her husband. "Hold me like you did by the lake on Naboo!"

No performer living or dead could pronounce the word "Naboo" without sounding like a moron, and Lucas matches that authorial infelicity with dozens of others. One of the movie's villains is named "Dooku," and it's a pity that Lucas didn't arrange for Dooku to visit Naboo, because that could have generated a truly memorable piece of dialogue, like "You should never have come to Naboo, Dooku!"

Later in the film, Vader's mentor Obi-Wan Kenobi tells Padmé that her hubby has murdered some children: "He killed younglings at the Jedi temple!" She storms off and confronts him: "Obi-Wan says you killed younglings!"

Padmé's anger and shock seem a mite surprising, since in *Attack of the Clones* her then-boyfriend Anakin had told her about another occasion on which he had killed some kids. This is spoken in a soliloquy that suggests what *Macbeth* might have been like if it had been written by George Lucas: "I killed them! I killed them all! They're dead, every single one of them! And not just the men, but the women and the children, too!! I slaughtered them like animals! I HATE THEM!"

But I digress, because that speech isn't in the film under review—and there are plenty of other hilarious examples of bad writing on display in *Revenge of the Sith*.

For example: Obi-Wan uncovers the killing of the younglings by checking out some hidden video at the Jedi Temple. The wise old creature Yoda, who may be the most intelligent person in the universe, but seems to have learned English by reading old *Time* magazines, warns him: "Obi-Wan, watch the surveillance tapes you should not!"

Yoda has just returned from a diplomatic mission to a planet inhabited by bipedal gorillas because, as he explains in the rounded tones of an opponent of the John Bolton nomination, "Good relations with the Wookiees I have." Later, a defeated Yoda sighs: "Into exile I must go." You half-expect him to be followed by six other dwarves chanting, "Hi ho, hi ho / Into exile we will go . . ."

Anakin is invited to attend the theater as a guest of the president of

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the republic (a scene that allows Lucas to let us know that the favored form of entertainment in the highly advanced *Star Wars* galaxy is a Cirque du Soleil show performed inside a blob of translucent Jell-O). The president tells him about the Dark Side of the Force, and how it can be used to bring people back from the dead. Anakin decides he wants in. To which the only possible response is: That's *it*? The entire universe is thrown out of balance and evil defeats good all because one petulant and whiny guy doesn't want Natalie Portman to buy the farm?

"Dialogue is not my thing," Lucas has said. "I don't like writing, and I don't like scripts." But there is a whole lot more to a script than just the dialogue. There are also small matters such as plot, motivation, and character development. How is it possible that Lucas could have satisfied himself with the notion that the destruction of the galactic democracy and the triumph of evil over good could all have sprung from a single lousy pregnancy? Granted, Mrs. Darth Vader wears some very fetching beaded outfits—plus, she's a senator just like Hillary Clinton, only decades younger and way better looking. Even so, this is astoundingly thin gruel on which to hang six movies made over a period of 28 years.

Back in 1977, we were told in the original *Star Wars* that Darth Vader "was seduced by the Dark Side of the Force"—that Vader had become a villain because he had been consumed by a lust for power, so that he could boss people around, blow up planets, and, generally speaking, control the universe. Like all great villains, the Darth Vader we saw in the first *Star Wars* actually loved being a bad guy. He enjoyed being able to choke annoying underlings by pinching his thumb and forefinger together. He relished his swordfight with his old mentor Obi-Wan Kenobi. He didn't even mind slicing his own son's hand off (in the second film) just to prove a point.

But the Darth Vader we see at the end of *Revenge of the Sith* hasn't been seduced. He's been tricked. He's not a villain. He's a schmuck.

And what of George Lucas? He is, by leagues, the most commercially successful moviemaker in history. Forget the billion-plus dollars he has earned from the *Star Wars* movies. Industrial Light & Magic, the special-effects firm he began with his *Star Wars* profits, grosses $1 billion *per year*.

But what happened to the director who made the thrilling mood piece *American Graffiti*, that deceptively casual account of a bunch of teenagers in a California town in 1962 hanging out on the last summer night before the school year begins? What happened to the guy who revolutionized science fiction by making an outer-space adventure that managed to be cheerful, exciting, and lighthearted?

The tragedy of George Lucas is that he made billions of dollars, and all it did was turn him into a drag. ♦

Great Moments in Acknowledgments

"Book acknowledgments always remind me of the Academy Awards thank-you speeches, without any of the entertaining drama of the winner crying, falling out of her dress, or tripping on the way up to the stage. To the reader, this section is a boring, perfunctory part of a book. But now having actually written a book and realizing just how sadistic and reclusive the process can be, I know that if it weren't for my rather large team of supporters, I would have never seen this book through. . . .

"To my incredible agent, Jill Marsal, it is because of your enthusiasm and dedication that these stories have found their way into print. You saw the diamond-in-the-rough potential of my book proposal and have been my champion ever since. I also want to thank my brilliant editor, Marnie Cochran, for giving me all of the latitude in writing the book that I desired and whose unwavering enthusiasm, energy, and vision for this project have made it what it is. It was also Marnie who invented the marvelous phrase 'Stay-at-Work mom,' giving working mothers a more empowering and positive identity.

Peter Steiner

"I also want to thank my mother, Brenda Bengis, my first Stay-at-Work mom role model. My mom was 'sequencing' her life decades before the term was ever invented."

From Wendy Sachs's
How She Really Does It: Secrets of Successful Stay-at-Work Moms
(Da Capo)

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The Standard Reader

***The New New Journalism: Conversations with America's Best Nonfiction Writers on Their Craft* by Robert S. Boynton (Vintage, 496 pp., $13.95)**

The new journalism isn't new, according to Robert Boynton's thought-provoking book. Also known as the literary essay and narrative nonfiction, new journalism had precedents in Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, Mark Twain, Stephen Crane, and other 18th- and-19th-century English and American writers. First used in the 1880s, the term "new journalism" described the blend of sensationalism and crusading journalism—muckraking for the have-nots—found in the *New York World*. In the 1890s, city editor Lincoln Steffens set editorial policy using what he called "artfully told true stories"—a good definition of new journalism.

Wondering how one tells true stories artfully, Boynton interviewed 19 nonfiction writers considered at the top of their form, including William Langewiesche, Gay Talese, Richard Ben Cramer, Susan Orlean, and Calvin Trillin, and asked them about everything from reporting methods to interviewing to writing and revising. Their answers showed that despite differences in work habits, all of the writers are obsessive and passionate about writing. And their articles often become best-selling books and award-winning movies.

Many cite the influence of the *New Yorker*'s Joseph Mitchell. As one writer observes: "[Mitchell] manages to get all the marks of writing off the piece. You couldn't imagine him laboring over it—although he obviously did." Others cite John McPhee, and the book is full of his nuggets of advice, such as this: "Power and beauty emerge most often from things that are simple and clear."

Part history of the movement, part close-up of its practitioners, this book, which grew out of Boynton's attempt to demystify nonfiction writing for his students at New York University, makes new (or new new) journalism more alluring than ever. Read all about it.

—*Diane Scharper*

***Garlic and Sapphires: The Secret Life of a Critic in Disguise* by Ruth Reichl (Penguin, 352 pp., $24.95)**

What does it take to be a restaurant critic? In her third volume of table talk, Ruth Reichl, editor of *Gourmet* magazine and former restaurant critic at the *New York Times*, says what she values most is her anonymity. Once a critic is recognizable, their photo is likely to be posted in restaurant kitchens. To avoid red carpet treatment, Reichl resorts to a Lon Chaney-level of disguise.

First, she commissions a makeup artist who helps her mock up half a dozen faces, complete with wigs and dramatic makeup. For a wardrobe, she picks up thrift shop pieces. And to fill out her characters, she assumes new identities. At one restaurant she might be a dowdy matron. At another establishment she could turn up as an aging hippie. In costume, Reichl says she would be unfamiliar to her own mother (whose identity she sometimes appropriates as one of her characters).

But Reichl's love of food is not inherited. Her mother—"the Queen of Mold," Reichl calls her—refused to believe in the concept of spoilage. Her finest hour was a lunch she gave when 26 of the guests went to the hospital to have their stomachs pumped.

When her hackles are aroused by a disappointing dish, Reichl turns into the George Patton of foodies. The book's format includes a smattering of reprints of actual reviews—a bad notice can be really scary.

But when she is pleased, her approval boils over the top. The taste of poached codfish at New York's Union Pacific restaurant produces "a sensation both dizzying and exciting, as if you were flying and swimming at the same time." A passion fruit crème brûlée induces a similar effect. "I was in a wild garden with the wind blowing through my hair," she writes.

At one job, Reichl decides to pen two reviews of the same place: one as an ordinary civilian, the other in her professional role. The restaurant chosen for this bold experiment is the illustrious Le Cirque. The result is predictable. The ordinary citizen is snubbed and the critic is fawned over. So Le Cirque loses one of its four stars. And the critic becomes a celebrity.

—*Martin Levin*

***Haiku U.: From Aristotle to Zola, 100 Great Books in 17 Syllables* by David M. Bader (Gotham Books, 112 pp., $15)**

David M. Bader, author of 1999's *Haikus for Jews*, has now thoughtfully converted a hundred great books—his choice, not ours—from their door-stopping originals into 17-syllable, easy-to-swallow morsels for the polymath on the run. It's not so easy to distill, say, Thomas Mann or Michel Foucault into comprehensible 12-word sentences, while still retaining their sense and nonsense. But Bader does it with wisdom and, as you might guess, humor. *Oedipus Rex*: "Chorus: Poor bastard. / Oedipus: This is awful! / Blind Seer: Told you so." *Remembrance of Things Past:* "Tea-soaked madeleine— / a childhood recalled. I had / Brownies like that once." *The Importance of Being Earnest:* "Earnestly posing / as Ernest, Jack learns he's named / Ernest in earnest."

Like the Japanese tea ceremony, these haiku combine culture with flavor, tradition and elegance, and save you the time and expense of reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

—*Philip Terzian*

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Parody

***Washington Wizards coach Eddie Jordan and President of Basketball Operations Ernie Grunfeld met with Kwame Brown yesterday morning, and Grunfeld said afterward that "philosophical differences" forced the two sides to mutually agree that they were better off without each other.* —News item**

The Washington Post

SPORTS

Friday, May 6, 2005

SHIRLEY POVICH

I Dunk, Therefore I Am

Talking to Kwame Brown's teammates on the practice court yesterday, it was difficult to tell how his philosophy distinguished him from the other players. But raising the subject among his fellow Wizards brought a variety of responses.

Point guard Gilbert Aquinas was especially sure of himself: "Without Coach," he declared, "we're nothing. He's the creator of all things, you see what I'm saying, and if you take away Coach, you take away everything."

Reserve guard Steve Descartes shook his head vehemently. "No way," he said, "No way, man."

"I'm not saying Coach ain't important," Descartes continued, "but without us players, you know, the Coach don't mean nothing. How do I even know I'm not dreaming I'm in the NBA? Because I *think* I'm in the NBA, you see."

Jogging down the court, center Etan Spinoza begged to differ. "I don't go along with everything Aquinas lays down," he said, "but I do agree with him that, without Coach, we might as well be back on the blacktop playing pick-up, you know? I think we're in this league and all, but the only thing that makes us professionals is Coach. Everything else is meaningless."

The sound of raised voices prompted TNT commentator and retired all-star Charles "Bishop" Berkeley to stroll over from mid-court and join the discussion.

"Damn," he said, "I'm not even sure the NBA exists. I mean, I got this ball in my hand, but all I know is my mind is *telling* me this is a ball, right? The reality of the situation is that this ball and this team and the fans and, like, everything exists because I think it does."

Descartes laughed. "You mean if I throw it in from half court," he said, pointing at the basket, "but there's nobody in the arena to see it, I didn't make a basket?"

To which power forward Antawn Heidegger responded: "Mmm-mm," punching Descartes playfully on the shoulder. "I don't even know what a basket is, anyway," he continued. "It's just something people say we make to put points on the board. But I think baskets are, like, just a construct, a way of representing something completely different from the game of basketball."

There was a moment's silence while the other players considered what Heidegger, one of the most respected players in the league, had said. Then the silence was broken by a sudden sharp, awkward noise from down the court.

"What was that?" somebody asked.

"That," said a meditative ex-Lakers coach Phil Jackson looking down from the stands, "is the sound of Kwame's absence."

See **SPINOZA,** *D7, Col. 1*

Kwame Debacle Leaves I

By F. D. Maurice

the weekly Standard

May 23, 2005

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Whose Health Care Is It Anyway?

FROM THE
HOOVER
PRESS

POWER TO THE PATIENT
Selected Health Care Issues
and Policy Solutions

Edited by Scott W. Atlas

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In the debate over health-care reform in this country, it seems that one vitally important question is too often left out of the equation: Why should we expect the government to be responsible for providing medical care in the first place?

Food, housing, and clothing are no less basic to our daily lives, and yet citizens don't want government bureaucrats to tell us what kind of cereal we can buy or how much it will cost. When it comes to health care, however, the assumption that government needs to be involved ignores the virtual stranglehold the government already exerts on health-care prices in this country and the failure of that system.

Despite the presence of private insurers in our health-care marketplace, it is the government that to a great extent controls the price of health care. It is bureaucrats who set the reimbursement rates that doctors and health-care providers use to set their pricing, rather than relying on the actual costs and profit margins for their services. The most overt example is in Medicare-covered health services, where bureaucrats set "rates of reimbursement." Some multiple of these Medicare-determined rates also serves as the basis for a significant percentage of payments by private insurers. And **it is the federal control of the health-care dollar that has led to increased costs, delays in patient care, and frustrations for both doctors and patients.**

Christopher Conover of Duke University has estimated the cost of excessive regulation in the health-care market to exceed $339 billion, with a net cost of $169 billion—more than U.S. consumers spend every year on gasoline and oil. His figures show that the cost of the medical legal system alone, including litigation costs, court expenses, and defensive medicine, exceeds $80 billion.

This artificial pricing structure that our government imposes on consumers and doctors is unique to health care, and it has done little to rein in costs or improve care. The real cure for rising health-care costs is direct payment from patient to doctor, eliminating the third-party-payer system that shelters patients from making cost-conscious decisions and results in massive administrative costs and the artificial pricing of medical care. Prices come down when the patient is the customer—not the government or other third-party payer. Patients consider cost when they spend their own money: refractive eye surgery, whole-body-screening CT scans, and other procedures have come down in price when market forces are allowed to operate without third-party interference.

The isolation of the consumer from paying for health care and the inordinate amount of control that government exerts over health-care costs represent a startling exception to the free market system that has served us so well in every other major service industry. This should lead us to ask the question, **on what basis does "government" become the solution for escalating health-care costs?** And why, when it has failed to rein in those costs in the past, should we expect even more government control to be the answer today?

—Scott W. Atlas

Scott W. Atlas is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution; professor of radiology and chief of neuroradiology at Stanford University Medical School; and editor of Power to the Patient *(Hoover Press, 2005).*

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The *real* issues of Social Security reform

There is no longer any doubt that Social Security needs to be reformed. The nation's troubled retirement program will begin running a deficit in just 12 years. Overall, the program faces unfunded liabilities of more than $12 trillion. But while the politicians in Washington debate whether this represents a crisis or just a big problem, the Cato Institute believes it is an opportunity to build a new and better retirement program for all Americans.

Ownership

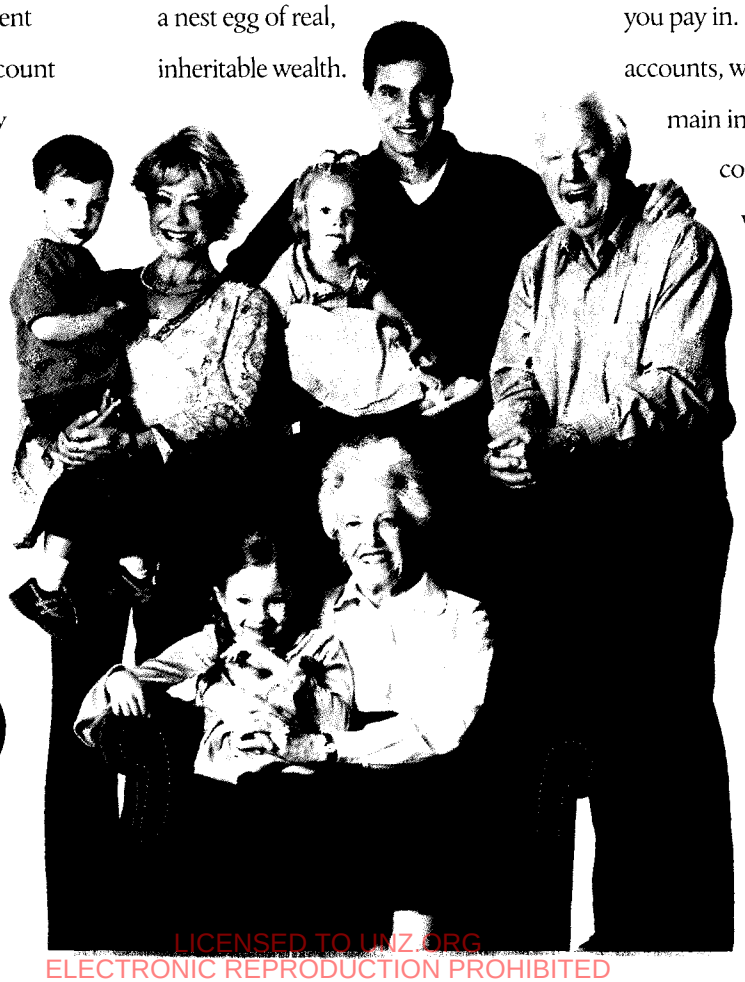
Under the current Social Security system you have no legal, contractual, or property rights to your benefits. What you receive from Social Security is entirely up to the 535 members of Congress. But personal retirement accounts would give you ownership and control over your retirement funds. The money in your account would belong to you—money the politicians could never take away.

Inheritability

Because you don't own your Social Security benefits under the current system, they are not inheritable. Millions of workers are not able to pass anything on to their loved ones. But personal retirement accounts would change that by enabling you to build a nest egg of real, inheritable wealth.

Choice

Choice is part of the essence of America. Yet when it comes to retirement, Congress forces all Americans into a one-size-fits-all, cookie-cutter retirement program, a system that cannot pay the benefits it has promised and under which you have no right to the money you pay in. With personal retirement accounts, workers who wanted to remain in traditional Social Security could do so. But younger workers who wanted a choice to save and invest for their future retirement would have that option.



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